They become badasses: Qualitative inquiry into academic identity and face negotiation in mentoring relationships

By
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Abstract

In higher education, an essential part of the training of graduate students happens in the one-on-one relationship between a mentor (faculty member) and the protégé (graduate student). As mentors work with graduate students, mentors often engage in face threatening speech acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987) as they work with their protégés. Face-threatening acts (FTAs) "run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 301). It is not always possible to communicate in ways that do not infringe on the face wants of the other party. While we know much about the ways in which face threatening acts can happen, this dissertation offers to contextualize them within the unique power-laden relationship of academic mentors and protégés (Blumer et al. 2010; Gammel & Rustein-Riley, 2016; Kram, 1985). Moreover, as I look into the experience of both mentors' and protégés' experiences of giving and receiving face threatening acts, this research will also explore ways in which both parties communicate, enact, and perform an academic professional identity. Three major themes emerged from this phenomenological study. First, setting boundaries was an important form of negotiating face threatening conversations for both mentors and protégés. Typically, the boundaries were set by the mentors through both implicit and explicit communication. Second, mentors and protégés enacted academic identity as mentoring relationships involved the place in which intellectual process coaching occurred as well as professional socialization into academia. Finally, mentoring was a form of praxis for faculty mentors as they enacted their epistemological commitments through whole person, hands-on, and hands-off mentoring. Implications for theory and practical applications are discussed.

Keywords: Mentoring, Politeness Theory, Academic Identity, and Relational Power Dynamics

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Marilee Kingsford, and grandmother, Lexi Boyce. These women taught me a love of reading and learning from a young age. You both showed me what it means to be a strong woman, and how that comes in many different forms. I want to carry on the legacy of being an educator that the two of you set for me. I feel immensely grateful for the love and encouragement both of you gave me as I finished my degree. I wouldn't be here without you.

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Chapter One: Introduction

As of 2021, according to the US Census 85% of the population 25 and older had earned a bachelor's degree or higher (US Census Bureau, 2021). Yet significantly fewer earn the highest levels of educational attainment with only 2.1% of the total population in the US earning a doctoral degree. Given, that doctorates are such challenging degrees to earn, it is shocking to hear when an individual is stripped of their doctoral degree status. And yet, this is what happened to Jodi Whitaker when research she had published with her dissertation mentor, Professor Brad J. Bushman, was questioned (Flaherty, 2017). The article, *"Boom, Headshot!": Effect of Video Game Play and Controller*, was originally published in *Communication Research* in 2012 and argued that playing violent video games improved real-life shooting skills. Bushman, the Margaret Hall and Robert Randal Rinehart Chair of Mass Communication at the Ohio State University, had been a member of President Obama's committee on gun violence. His research challenges "myths" about gun violence, and it is suggested that he had a potentially unethical motivation to manipulate the findings of this data set to further his own political agenda (Flaherty, 2017).

Because the findings of this research directly contradicted the research of others interested in violence and video games, the findings of the paper were challenged by both Patrick Markey, a psychology professor at Villanova University and Malte Elson, a behavioral psychology postdoc at Ruhr University Bochum in Germany (Flaherty, 2017). Markey and Elson then began inquiring about the irregularities they noticed in some of the variables in the data as it was reported in the article. According to the retraction statement on *Communication Research's* website, "the values of the questioned variables could not be confirmed because the original research records were unavailable." The article was subsequently rescinded from publication.

Following this first article being rescinded, Bushman and Whitaker (on which Bushman was the lead author) had to correct the findings of a second 2016 article. Further, Bushman agreed to the retraction of another paper that Whitaker was not involved (Flaherty, 2017). As a result of these retractions, The Ohio State University, decided to revoke Whitaker's degree, while her mentor, Brad J. Bushman, was cleared of any wrongdoing by the university.

In a joint statement, to *Retraction Watch*, Markey and Elson expressed frustration with the response from OSU:

> There were two authors on the problematic "Boom, Headshot!" study. That the female, junior researcher is found culpable for those problems while the male, senior researcher is not, seems questionable… we believe that all researchers involved in a particular project are responsible for the outcome of the said project. This is especially true in cases when a senior author is the mentor of a junior researcher. We are pleased that the outcome of this investigation has been to retract a manuscript containing potentially erroneous findings, but are disheartened by the decision, by all parties involved, to lay the blame for these errors at the feet of a single member of a multi-person research team. (Oransky, 2017)

This statement from the whistleblowers in this controversy points to the deeply entrenched power dynamics which exist within academic mentoring relationships between graduate students and faculty mentors. This situation, while extreme, demonstrates the ways in which doctoral student mentoring is embedded with asymmetrical power dynamics that follow the student even after they have graduated from their PhD granting institution.

Whitaker and Bushman exemplify a common relationship within most organizations – mentors like Bushman, work with novice scholars like Whitaker to help guide them through career moves and organizational assimilation (Kramer, 2010). Mentoring, according to Sias

(2009) is a particular type of organizational relationship "in which the mentor functions as a type of 'guide' for the development and career advancement of the protégé/mentee" (p. 29). Sias (2009) argues there are two characteristics that make a mentoring relationship distinct from other organizational relationships. First, unlike other relationships, this one is typically asymmetrical – most of the communication (e.g., feedback, information sharing, social support) is downward on the organizational hierarchy from the mentor to the protégé and is not often reciprocated. Second, the mentor is focused on the protégé's career as a whole instead of specific daily tasks or job-related functions for the protégé's current organizational position. Seeking out and establishing relationships with mentors is often a critical step in one's career advancement and satisfaction. Yet, given the power disparities between mentors and protégés, these relationships are often complicated.

A mentor can provide guidance through explicit or implicit communication to help guide the success of a protégé who is often less experienced in the field or industry. Offering feedback or advice, is often a crucial conversation that happens between mentor and protégé. While these conversations are hopefully beneficial to both individuals and the organizations, as the exemplar above demonstrates, advice-giving can have huge financial and legal ramifications if not handled well. Thus, in order to better understand these conversations, this dissertation will use politeness theory to investigate the ways in which face-threatening conversations are perceived by both mentors and protégés. Further, this study will explore the manifestation of a professional academic identity.

Higher education is one organizational context in which formal mentoring relationships are essential to the goals of organizational members (Lunsford, et al., 2017). Graduate students work closely with faculty members to learn how to be successful in the academy. Faculty

members also benefit from the service they provide to mentoring graduate students (Lunsford, et al, 2017; Kram, 1985). However, in these formal mentoring relationships, the power differential between the mentor and protégé is often asymmetrical – with the mentor in the higher position of power (Johnson, 2017). Mentors not only hold positions of higher power within the organizational structure of colleges and universities, but also, have power over graduate students as their direct supervisors for activities like teaching, research, and program completion. This asymmetrical relationship can be difficult for both parties to navigate, especially when the protégé is not meeting expectations of the organization, academic programs, or their mentor (Johnson, 2017). Therefore, to better understand the complexities of asymmetrical mentoring relationships, these course-correction conversations should be further investigated.

One of the important communicative roles of graduate students' mentors is to offer advice – which is likely why many academic departments use the term "advisor" rather than mentor. Engaging in advice giving, or feedback, is always a potentially face-threatening act (Sias, 2009). Depending on the relationship and context, the face of the protégé is typically at higher risk of being violated. The present study is particularly interested in situations where mentors confront protégés about behavior or choices that are not in alignment with the personal, professional, and academic goals of the protégé, academic program, or institution of higher education.

As mentors and protégés work with one another, academic mentoring provides a unique context in which graduate students are not only coached through the typical organizational political scene, but they are also being socialized into becoming an academic as a result of the direct, one-on-one relationship with their mentor. Ashforth and Mael (1989) argue that individuals' identities can in part be derived from organizations themselves as well as various

subgroups within organizations (e.g. workgroup, department, union, cohort, etc.). Academia provides many different levels of identification for individuals working within the higher education system. Thus, through the mentoring of graduate students, they are given implicit and explicit messages regarding what it means to be a professional (Adams, 2012) in academia.

As I investigate these conversations, I will use politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) to understand advice-giving and feedback-based conversations. Politeness theory builds on Goffman's (1969) notion of face. One's face refers to "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself [sic]" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). When individuals engage in social interaction, their face is how they wish to be perceived. Brown and Levinson (1987) break face into two different types: positive face refers to consistent positive self-image or the desire to be well-liked and social approval. Negative face refers to the need to have autonomy and "freedom from imposition" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). Individuals act in ways in order to maintain the face of themselves and others. However, as discussed previously, there are often times when conversations become face threatening, like when providing negative feedback to a protégé. When the face of a protégé is threatened while providing feedback, politeness theory provides a framework to explain the level at which this feedback is threatening –to the addressee's negative or positive face. Moreover, politeness theory offers heuristic value to help explain the communicative strategies mentors choose when it is necessary to engage in a face-threatening speech act with their protégés.

Due to the asymmetrical nature of mentoring relationships (Sias, 2009), the power dynamics of mentoring relationships are often asymmetrical. Power in this study is viewed as relational and a behavior or process that permeates all social interaction (Foucault, 1995). Rather than viewing power as value-laden, Foucault takes the position that power is produced through

social structures and communication. Thus, it is through social interaction, “people enact power to produce and reproduce, resist, or transform structures of communication and meaning, in even the most mundane social practices” (Allen, 2011, p. 25). The mentor, because of their organizational status and knowledge of the field, often occupies a position of higher power than the protégé (Johnson, 2017). Mentors often create expectations for communication and facilitate the structure of communication during relationships with the protégés (Kram, 1985). Protégés in mentoring relationships within academia are in a normatively deferential position (Johnson, 2017). Attempts at subversive actions against one’s mentor could potentially risk one’s future within the field (Johnson, 2017).

Power is also enacted when one violates the face of another. Typically, those with more relational power have agency to violate another’s face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Moreover, intersections of race and gender add to the dynamics of power relations embedded in the traditional model of mentoring (Cobb-Roberts et al., 2017). While traditional mentoring reinforces asymmetrical power dynamics, there are a few models that attempt to transform such normative power structures.

Relational mentoring models encourage individuals to rethink the common asymmetrical power dynamics within mentoring. This perspective considers the relationship between the two parties as bidirectional and strives to include “experiences and interchange of mutual respect; active participation; valuing of both parties; respectful challenging of each other to help facilitate personal growth; and shared learning” (Blumer et al. 2010, p. 71). Additionally, feminist mentoring attempts to push back on the power dynamics of traditional arrangements by focusing on an equal balance of power (Cobb-Roberts et al., 2017). Feminist mentoring acknowledges the “emotional aspect of being an academic and the valuing of paid and unpaid work” (p. 379).

Unpaid labor for academics is especially important to consider for academic women because it speaks to the nurturing roles which female faculty are often expected to take on without additional compensation. Feminist mentoring therefore emphasizes the importance of collaboration, which is vital for those who are working at the margins of academia.

In order to contextualize these conversations in extant literature, in the next chapter, I first review the mentoring literature, looking specifically at the functions, approaches, and types of mentoring relationships. Following that section, I review power, ethics and dysfunctional mentoring. Next, scholarship about identity, identification and the discursive construction of the professional is summarized as it relates to academic professional identity. Then I articulate the major tenets and concepts involved in politeness theory in order to understand the implications of face-threatening acts. Then the research questions are presented. Chapter three addresses the phenomenological methodology and methods used for data collection and analysis in order to answer the proposed research questions. Chapter four provides a robust discussion of the major themes to emerge from the data concerning boundaries, academic identity, and mentoring as praxis. Finally, in chapter five I will discuss the implications of this research by outlining the contributions to existing literature and theory, practical applications, limitations and future directions for this program of study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In order to situate this study in extant scholarship, I review existing literature about mentoring relationships, functions and approaches to mentoring, power and ethical considerations during mentoring, as well as politeness theory. Then the research questions are presented.

Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring is typically a professional relationship in which "one person, the mentor, provides career sponsorship, advice and role modeling for the other, the mentee" (Gammel & Rustein-Riley, 2016, p. 29). Mentorship is a foundational relationship in many professions, but it is particularly salient in academia between faculty and graduate students. Across disciplines, the mentor/protégé model has been long and widely adopted as a key feature of graduate education. Often, academic mentoring is the locus of academic career development occurs. According to Zacher et al. (2019), academic career development, "entails the career development process of scholars working in research, teaching, and/or administrative roles within academic and higher education contexts" (p. 358). Through academic mentoring, faculty mentors provide graduate student protégés with coaching and socialization into the field of academia. This relationship offers the protégé many benefits including: "development of professional skills and identity, procurement of internship and training opportunities, enhanced satisfaction with doctoral training, higher salaries, more rapid promotion rates, and greater career satisfaction" (Huwe & Johnson, 2003, p. 42). Graduate student mentoring, as well as mentoring in other organizational contexts, holds distinct relational norms that set these relationships apart from other types of organizational relationships (Sias, 2009).

Broadly, mentoring relationships have two unique features: first that the communication is typically asymmetrical (Sias, 2009). The faculty mentor gives feedback and advice to their student protégé in order to advance the protégé's career goals. It would be a rare occasion that the protégé would provide a faculty mentor career advice. Secondly, mentors focus on the protégé's career as a whole (Sias, 2009). While the faculty mentor may engage in some day-to-day supervision of teaching or research tasks, the main goal of the relationship is to help develop the protégé into a successful academic. Mentoring sessions are often the place where graduate students think about and plan their future career paths.

For graduate students, mentoring is a unique and multifunctional process. In addition to the traditional functions of providing career and psychosocial support, faculty mentors of graduate students also provide research and intellectual support to their graduate student protégés (Carpenter et al., 2015). Mentors guide protégés through the steps of navigating their graduate education and help them plan for the future. Mentoring can continue after protégés graduate from academic programs and become junior faculty at a new institution.

Graduate students' academic programs are uniquely influenced by their relationships with mentors. In a study by Baker et al. (2014) most graduate student participants perceived mentoring relationships to be important. Furthermore, research indicates there is a positive relationship between effective mentoring and graduate student research and writing productivity (e.g., Lunsford, 2012; Watson et al., 2009). In a five-year longitudinal study, Paglis et al. (2006) investigated the impact of mentoring on student productivity, career-commitment, and self-efficacy. While there was no support to show that mentoring influenced career-commitment, this study did find that effective mentoring not only positively predicted the protégé's research productivity, but also showed "psychosocial mentoring positively influenced subsequent research

self-efficacy" (Paglis, et al., 2006, p. 470). Effective mentoring fulfills various functions, which are addressed below.

Career Functions of Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring relationships serve many functions for both mentors and protégés. Kram (1985) identified two main functions of mentoring relationships: career functions and psychosocial functions. *Career functions* are "aspects of the relationship that enhance advancement in an organization" (Kram, 1985, p. 24). This encompasses more tangible and measurable aspects of a mentoring relationship. Career functions all share the following characteristics. First, these functions rely on the mentor's position, experience, and organizational influence (Kram, 1985). Second, the mentoring relationship helps the protégé's career-related goals as protégés learn about being a member of an organization, gaining exposure, and obtaining promotions (Kram, 1985). Third, mentoring also benefits the mentor's career-related goals by helping the mentor build respect through development of novice talent and cultivating a network of supportive individuals who are likely to reciprocate the support (Kram, 1985). Each of the five career functions discussed below all encompass these three characteristics.

Kram (1985) discusses five specific career functions of mentoring: *(1) sponsorship, (2) exposure-and-visibility, (3) coaching, (4) protection, and (5) challenging assignments*. Each career function supports the protégé in unique ways. First, *sponsorship* is one of the main career functions of mentoring. Sponsorship involves "actively nominating an individual for desirable lateral moves and promotions…without sponsorship, an individual is likely to be overlooked for promotions regardless of his or her competence and performance" (p. 25). Sponsorship can make a critical difference in the career trajectory of less experienced professionals. When mentors put

their support behind protégés, protégés can benefit from the social capital of mentors. Social capital refers to the resources one has based on one's personal network connections and group membership (Bourdieu, 1987). Sponsorship within academic mentoring relationships can take many forms. For example, faculty members can actively nominate their graduate student protégés for awards to recognize their research and teaching accomplishments. Alternatively, when opportunities to teach new classes or participate on a research team becomes available, a mentor may be instrumental in helping a graduate student secure a more strategic position within the department.

Second, mentors can play a critical function of creating *exposure-and-visibility* for their protégés. Less experienced individuals need opportunities to demonstrate their competence and performance. Mentors can create such opportunities for their protégés in ways that not only allow protégés to demonstrate their competence to mentors, but also to other senior members of the profession. Kram (1985) explains that the *exposure-and-visibility* function "involves assigning responsibilities that allow a lower-level manager to develop relationships with key figures in the organization who may judge his or her potential for further advancement" (p. 27). For those involved in academia, exposure-and-visibility within the discipline is a critical career function. For instance, bringing graduate students into research teams gives graduate students the opportunity to gain the first-hand experience of conducting research they may not experience otherwise. Additionally, as this research is presented at conferences and shared with academic communities, mentors can create further opportunities for protégés to gain exposure to other institutions. Once graduate students are ready to go on the job market, previous exposure-and-visibility could be the difference between getting an initial interview or being passed over for another candidate. The benefit for both individuals in this function is the potential for social

capital (Bourdieu, 1987). For example, Iversen, Eady, and Wessely (2014) found that 93% of academic mentors involved in the program they examined agreed that being a mentor has been worthwhile. Moreover, the mentors found they had more insights and familiarity with the field as a whole and were motivated to think about their own career development because of mentoring novice academics. Mentors cultivate and maintain their networks through exposing protégés to professionals throughout the profession. In turn, protégés benefit from mentors' established network to gain *exposure-and-visibility* needed to create their own networks of support.

Third, Kram (1985) identifies *coaching* as another essential career function of mentoring relationships. Coaching "involves sharing a senior person's understanding of the important players – who can be trusted, who has the power, and who is likely to support or attack in a particular situation" (p.29). Coaching, according to Kram's perspective, means helping protégés navigate professional politics. Learning how to navigate relationships can be tricky for any newcomer. The long-term relationships that are established in academic institutions where tenured faculty have been working together for decades can create more complex relationships for newcomers to navigate than those of corporate environments who likely have shorter interpersonal work histories. Moreover, for those in academia, coaching can make the difference between being published in a top journal or an unranked outlet. For instance, when faculty members give graduate students insight into an editor's goals for a journal, it helps students tailor their submissions to fit the needs of the editor. Interested coaches can provide protégés the added value of understanding the political landscape of their organizations – valuable information protégés may not learn otherwise. At the same time, when sharing such information, protégés can be "significantly influenced by one particular perspective on the world; this may or may not be a perspective that ultimately enhances his or her ability to navigate the organization" (Kram,

1985, p. 29). Thus, Kram recommends that individuals seek out multiple coaches to lean on throughout various stages of their career. For those coaching, instilling intellectual perspectives in their protégés, ensures a legacy of future scholars that will carry on their similar teaching and research.

Fourth, mentors can provide *protection* for their protégés. *Protection* can be performed in many ways. Kram (1985) explains, “protection involves taking credit and blame in controversial situations, as well as intervening in situations where the junior colleague is ill-equipped to achieve satisfactory resolution” (p. 29). For instance, if graduate students are assigned to teach new classes during the same semester that they are slated to defend their dissertations, their faculty mentors may intervene on their behalf to see if the department chair will reassign such graduate students to avoid an excessive workload. That way, the faculty member is helping to protect the time and efforts of graduate students as they prepare to write and defend dissertations or theses. Whether it is protégés’ time, reputation, or capacity to do work, mentors can protect their protégés’ best interests in a variety of ways. While protection may be coming from a place of concern for protégés, it may not always work out that way. In the best circumstances, protection will support protégés’ careers, but in the worst circumstances, being overly protective will smother protégés from finding their own way.

The final career function of mentoring is providing *challenging assignments*. This function focuses on the development of protégés’ specific competencies related to their field and to experience a sense of accomplishment within their professional role. Giving protégés challenging assignments is a vital step in preparing them to perform well on difficult tasks so they can move forward. For instance, most graduate students are familiar with the challenging assignments of graduate school: extensive reading lists from course work, seminar papers,

engaging in research, comprehensive exams, and writing a thesis/dissertation. The goal of many assignments is to ultimately prepare graduate students to become successful academics in the future. Without challenging assignments, protégés remain “unprepared for positions of greater responsibility and authority” (Kram, 1985, p. 32). Research shows that as a result of mentoring, academics are far more successful when it comes to various indicators of objective career success (Kaderli, et al., 2011). When looking at the career success indicators such as number of publications, leadership development, and job satisfaction were all positively correlated with mentoring (Ambler, et al., 2016; Holliday, et al., 2014). Therefore, giving protégés challenging work, supported with training and ongoing performance feedback, is critical to a successful future in their chosen fields.

These five functions of mentoring are focused on the career outcomes from the mentoring relationship. Each function contributes to individual advancement within an organization – often for both mentors and protégés. Next, the psychosocial functions of mentoring are reviewed.

Psychosocial Functions of Mentoring

In addition to career functions, mentoring also offers psychosocial functions to both parties. According to Kram (1985), “psychosocial functions are those aspects of a relationship that enhance an individual’s sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role” (p. 32). Unlike the career functions, which rely on mentors’ positions and influence within the profession or organization, psychosocial functions rely more on the quality of interpersonal mentoring relationships. Furthermore, while the career functions discussed above influence the protégé’s relationship with the organization/profession, psychosocial functions “affect the individual’s relationship with self and with significant others both within and outside the organization” (p. 32). Kram (1983) identifies four psychosocial functions: *(1) role modeling, (2)*

acceptance-and-confirmation, (3) counseling, and (4) friendship. Each function will be extrapolated below.

First, the most frequently reported psychosocial function is *role modeling* (Kram, 1985). For graduate students, their faculty mentor's attitudes, values, and behavior often provides a model to emulate. A mentor's career and organizational position provides a mental model from which protégés can imagine their own future by following similar roles. Effective role modeling requires mentors to set a desirable example, and the protégé to identify with said example. Kram (1985) explains the identification process for both mentors and protégés is both conscious and unconscious. Mentors may not be aware of the ways in which they are setting an example for novice organizational members. Simultaneously, protégés may not be aware of the strength of their identification with mentors. Moreover, as protégés gain experience, they will become more selective about the behaviors they wish to emulate, and which they will disregard.

The second psychosocial function of mentoring is *acceptance-and-confirmation*. Kram (1985) writes, "through this function both individuals drive a sense of self from the positive regard conveyed by the other" (p. 35). As mentors provide support and encouragement to their protégés, protégés are likely to feel more confident in their development in the field. Acceptance-and-confirmation creates the mutual respect and trust needed between both parties for protégés to feel comfortable with taking risks and experimenting with new behaviors. Moreover, Kram (1985) claims that when protégés experience acceptance-and-confirmation, they are more willing to disagree and start conflict in the relationship. Creating space for conflict within the relationship develops a tolerance for difference within the relationship, and ultimately allows for self-differentiation. When protégés experience less acceptance-and-confirmation from a mentor, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that will conform to expectations. Protégés who lack

acceptance-and-confirmation from their mentors will spend their "energy trying to please and win acceptance and less energy exploring who he [sic] wants to become in the organizational world" (Kram, 1985, p. 35).

Counseling is the third psychosocial function that "enables an individual to explore personal concerns that may interfere with a positive sense of self in the organization. Internal conflicts that put him or her at odds with self become the focus of discussion in the relationship" (p. 36). Conversations between mentors and protégés provide a forum in which protégés can "openly talk about anxieties, fears and ambivalence that detract from productive work" (p. 36). Mentors can offer support and advice for protégés' self-exploration by providing feedback to resolve problems, sharing personal experiences as alternative viewpoints, and active listening (Kram, 1985). Ideally, when provided with this type of support, protégés are able to cope with personal concerns more effectively. Novice organizational members' personal concerns typically fall within three categories: developing competence within a new career; relating to new organizational members while maintaining personal values and individuality; and balancing new work responsibilities with the other areas of life (Kram, 1985). Exploring protégés' concerns in an early stage of one's career with a trusted party, like a mentor, who can empathize with concerns, can be invaluable for protégés.

Finally, mentors and protégés often create deep and lasting friendships. The *friendship function* is characterized by "social interaction that results in mutual liking and understanding and enjoyable informal exchanges about work and outside work experiences" (p. 38). Social interaction of friendships between mentors and protégés enhances work experiences, especially on difficult tasks (Kram, 1985). Cultivating a friendship with one's mentor may help facilitate comfort when interacting with others in positions of authority. While there are definitely benefits

of friendship within a mentoring relationship, there are also limitations. Cross-gender dynamics may create barriers to organizational perceptions of the relationship, and thus individuals in such positions may be less likely to engage in informal interactions (Sias, 2009). Additionally, mentors may desire to maintain boundaries so that when providing feedback and evaluation to protégés, they can mitigate feeling guilty or ambivalent. Psychosocial functions help novice organizational members to develop their sense of competence, identity and effectiveness in their work role.

Career and psychosocial functions of mentoring are not entirely distinct – often one function assists in the execution of another. For example, "supporting career advancement may also enhance an individual's sense of competence and effectiveness" in their role (Kram, 1985, p. 39). Through interacting with a mentor who fulfills a variety of mentoring functions, protégés benefit by clarifying "personal values, develop confidence in a unique style, and can address dilemmas that surface" during their early career or as they transition into a new one (Kram, 1985, p. 39). For doctoral students in particular, both instrumental (career) and psychosocial mentoring positively predicted protégés' self-efficacy and interest in pursuing an academic career (Curtin, et al., 2016).

At times, mentors should push their protégés outside of their comfort zone. In order to push the boundaries of their comfort zones, mentors need to confront the areas in which protégés are not performing to their full potential or perhaps where protégés need to redirect their focus. These conversations can be highly emotional; however, they are also necessary for growth. The ways in which a mentor chooses to engage in offering feedback is likely going to be influenced by their approach to mentoring. Approaches to mentoring will be discussed in the next section.

Approaches to Mentoring

There are a variety of approaches to mentoring. Typically, the terms of mentoring relationships are determined by mentors (Johnson, 2017), but both relational partners contribute to the (in)formality, and norms of the relationship. While there are many ways to approach mentoring, this section will highlight the most commonplace approaches, including: (1) traditional mentorship, (2) relational mentorship, and (3) feminist mentoring.

Traditional, also known as transactional mentorship focuses solely on the protégé's career. Mentors will help guide protégés through many different aspects of career promotion, and in return, protégés often give loyalty to their mentor in return (Gammel & Rustein-Riley, 2016). This model has largely remained the approach for most academic mentoring (Lunsford, et al., 2017). In return for helping their students publish, faculty members will expect to share authorship credit for competitive academic journals. Similarly, recounting one's academic lineage to others in the field at conferences is often a way of showing loyalty to one's mentor. Even staying in academia and pursuing an R1 research job is, arguably, a sign of loyalty to one's academic mentor. This approach to mentorship relies heavily on strict power relationships (Gammel & Rustein-Riley, 2016).

Alternatively, relational mentoring challenges the power dynamics of transactional mentoring. This perspective considers the relationship between the two members as bidirectional and strives to include "experiences and interchange of mutual respect; active participation; valuing of both parties; respectful challenging of each other to help facilitate personal growth; and shared learning" (Blumer et al. 2010, p. 71). The goal in relational mentoring is to distribute the power of the relationship and help protégés find power within themselves rather than power being exclusively conferred by a mentor "who has more status and authority" (Gammel &

Rustein-Riley, 2016). Relational mentoring strives to be "mutually beneficial, more horizontal, less vertical or hierarchical" (p. 30). For a faculty member and graduate student, this could look like the mentor allowing the graduate student take lead on a research project. Taking lead on the project would provide the graduate student with the opportunity to be an active participant in the research, while both parties are engaging in shared learning through the collaboration of research.

Finally, feminist mentoring, similar to relational mentoring, also questions the power dynamics often taken for granted within academic mentoring relationships (Cobb-Roberts, et al., 2017). Not only does feminist mentoring encourage an equal balance of power, this perspective also "acknowledges the emotional aspect of being an academic and the valuing of paid and unpaid work" (Cobb-Roberts, et al., 2017, p. 379). Much of the labor of mentoring could fall into the nurturing roles female faculty are often expected to play without professional compensation. Pushing back on the notion that the mentor has nothing to gain from the relationship not only questions the balance of power within the relationship, but also opens up opportunities for mentors to find collaborative allies who share academic values, and work at the margins of academia to question larger systems of power and oppression. This approach to mentoring works toward calls to cater to the specific needs of women of color who are typically marginalized in traditional academic mentoring processes (Cobb-Roberts, et al., 2017). Thus, feminist mentoring attempts a more inclusive approach inviting marginalized individuals' participation in the academy.

While there are many more approaches to mentoring such as peer or co-mentoring and team-based mentoring, those approaches are beyond the scope of this research. Thus, this section focused on approaches to mentoring which are most commonplace and used in dyadic

relationships. Traditional or transactional mentoring is often the baseline for mentoring relationships and relies on strict boundaries and asymmetrical power dynamics. Relational and feminist mentoring, on the other hand, both question the often power-laden nature of mentor-protégé dynamics and broaden the assumptions about the ways in which each party benefits from the relationship. While some approaches may flatten the power dynamics within the relationship, the inherent nature of the relationship still requires a careful consideration of how to ethically engage in mentoring relationships, which is addressed next.

Power and Ethical Concerns in Mentoring

As with other interpersonal relationships within organizations, mentoring raises particular ethical concerns that are worth exploring. This section will consider the ways in which power dynamics uniquely influence graduate student-faculty mentor relationships, sources of dysfunctional mentoring, and finally conclude with suggestions for ethical standards in mentoring relationships.

Power dynamics are of particular interest when thinking about the asymmetrical nature of graduate student-faculty mentoring relationships. Johnson (2017) claims that “In nearly all cases, mentors hold some measure of power relative to mentees and therefore must place mentee's interests first in all decisions and actions” (p. 114). Johnson (2017) places the burden of power upon mentors because they typically are the ones with more relational and organizational power within the relationship, and typically have more experience.

Mentors typically occupy positions of responsibility for the interests of protégés, thus, these two roles do not operate on equal terms (Plaut, 1993). Therefore, mentoring is a fiduciary relationship where in the mentor “must act with the utmost good faith and solely for the benefit of the dependent party [protégé]” (Plaut, 1993, p. 213). From this perspective, regardless of the

attempts at mitigating the power differentials between mentor and protégé, because a protégé is placing trust and confidence in the mentor to act in the protégé's best interest, mentors will always occupy a position of power within the relationship.

A key consideration for ethical engagement is how, when, and where a mentor decides to communicate with a protégé. From a fiduciary perspective, a mentor should always engage in communication that is in good faith and for the benefit of the protégé. Communicating in good faith does not mean always being *nice.* Kelsky (2015) strongly warns protégés against aligning themselves with a nice advisor, rather protégés should seek out someone who is "intense" and willing to bluntly tell you the truth about your work. Kelsky (2015) warns, "If you've never cried before, during, or after a meeting with your advisor, something is amiss… surround yourself with those who, from a place of care, push you far outside your own complacent comfort zone" (pp. 365 – 366). Note, that Kelsky emphasizes the feedback from mentors should come from a place of care for the success of their mentees. It is not without regard for the emotions or wellbeing of protégés that mentors should engage candidly as they push protégés beyond comfort zones. For the present study, communicating in good faith would be especially important when engaging in potentially face-threatening speech acts. Thus, mentors have a responsibility to consider ethical obligations as they develop and maintain mentoring relationships.

Dysfunctional Mentoring

Because of the power differential embedded within the relationship (Johnson, 2017), mentoring can become dysfunctional. Just like any other interpersonal relationship, mentoring can have a "dark side" (Scandura, 1998). Mentorship dysfunction and negative outcomes, as a result of poor mentoring relationships, are reasonably frequent, contrary to the overwhelming

positive focus of most mentoring literature (Johnson & Huwe, 2002; Scandura, 1998). A dysfunctional mentorship is, “one in which (a) the primary needs of one or both partners are not being met, (b) the long-term costs for one or both partners outweigh the long-term benefits, or (c) one or both partners are suffering distress as a result of being in the mentorship” (Johnson & Huwe, 2002, p. 45). Dysfunctional mentoring relationships can be the result of both negative interpersonal interactions, as well as problematic relational dynamics.

Johnson and Huwe (2002) created a typology of twelve common sources or problems that lead to dysfunctional mentoring relationships. The majority of the sources of dysfunction focus on the mentor within the relationship: mentor technical incompetence, mentor relationship incompetence, mentor neglect, exploitation, abandonment, and unethical/illegal behavior. Because the protégé is in the power-disadvantaged position within the relationship (Johnson & Huwe, 2002), the mentor has more of a burden to ensure their relationship is functioning in a manner that benefits the student. Just like all other interpersonal relationships, both parties can contribute to the dysfunction, but mentors have more responsibility to make sure relationship are positive because they have more relational and organizational power within mentoring relationship (Johnson & Huwe, 2002).

There are also sources of dysfunctional mentoring that can stem from either party in the mentoring relationship. For instance, boundary violations, relational conflict, and attraction can be sources of dysfunction that are equally impacted by both the mentor and protégé. While power influences these dysfunctions as well, the person in a power-deficit position can still engage in communicative behaviors that would impact the relationship negatively (e.g., blurring professional and personal roles, sexual relationships).

Engaging in ethical communication in mentoring

Ethical communication in mentoring often begins with considering the psychological contract that exists within the relationship (Haggard & Turban, 2012). According to Rousseau (1989) a psychological contract is, "an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party" (p. 123). While psychological contracts are typically considered in terms of employer-employee relationships, Haggard and Turban (2012) proposed that mentoring relationships also create the conditions for each party to create a psychological contract with the other.

From the psychological contract perspective, the focus of mentoring relationships shifts from, "what one expects to gain from the relationship to what one feels he or she is obligated to provide in the relationship" (Haggard & Turban, 2012, p. 1905). The authors found that both mentors and protégés reported obligations to one another and the obligations differed with respect to the formality or supervisory nature of the relationships. When the relationship was informal, both mentors and protégés reported more relational obligations to their partners. Alternatively, when the relationship had a supervisory component, then more transactional obligations were reported by both mentors and protégés. Thus, for relationships that are more informal, and/or have a supervisory component, both parties may feel more obligated to their partner. For most graduate student-faculty mentorships, the faculty member will occupy some sort of supervisory role (i.e., course supervisor, directing dissertations, research) in relation to the graduate student (Johnson, 2017). So, in these relationships, both parties may feel obligations to the other, even if neither party explicitly states what those obligations may be.

In order to make these psychological contracts more explicit, Johnson (2017) created a code of ethics for mentors to follow. Regardless of what approach to mentoring one may take (as

mentioned in the previous section), all mentors have the opportunity to establish a set of ethical standards for both formal and informal mentoring relationships. Building upon the code of ethics from the American Counseling Association (ACA) and American Psychological Association (APA), Johnson's (2017) mentoring code of ethics suggests nine principles to guide mentors as they ethically establish relationships, which can be broadly divided into two categories: behaviors and processes.

The behaviors-based principles include: beneficence – "working for the good of the individual and society by promoting mental health and well-being" (ACA, 2014, p. 3); nonmaleficence – avoiding harm (ACA, 2014); autonomy – encouraging independent thought, judgement and freedom from reliance on the mentor for a sense of professional self (Johnson, 2017); fidelity – honoring commitments and keeping promises in regard to the relationship (ACA, 2014); and justice – treating individuals fairly and equitably across demographic variables (ACA, 2014). Each of these principles directs mentors to keep their mentees' best interests foremost in mind as they engage in mentoring. Ultimately, the goal of these principles is to encourage mentors to encourage and promote the "career and personal development of those they mentor" in a way that is fair and equitable (Johnson, 2017, p. 115).

Secondly, the principles provide guidelines for mentors as potential rules of engagement. These processes include transparency, boundaries, privacy and competence. Johnson (2017) argues that mentors, especially in formal mentoring programs, should set the expectations for the relationship so that both parties know what to expect from one another. In doing so, mentors create appropriate boundaries for the relationship and lets protégés know they are protected in the relationship. Finally, Johnson (2017) suggests that mentors need to be actively engaged in

developing their own competence as a mentor through training, continuing education, and/or consultation.

Engaging ethically in mentoring should be a concern for every party involved in the relationship. As a fiduciary relationship, the mentor is in a position of obligation to always be acting and communicating with their protégé's best interests in mind. While some mentors may think that means being nice and never upsetting their protégé, as Kelsky (2015) pointed out, that is not always in the best interest of the protégé. In the next section, I will turn to literature on identity and identification in organizations by considering the implications of social identity that are often involved in mentoring relationships.

Professional Identity and Identification in Organizations

Identity is performative in that it is something that people "do" through communication (Carbaugh, 1996). Thus, from a communicative perspective, identity can be theorized as an individual's subject position as determined by structures of social discourses (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005). While other aspects of identity may be self-evident, social identity is both a dimension and outcome of communication performances. In some social contexts, one's social identity become more salient than others (Carbaugh, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). From this position, one's social identity both influences and is influenced by one's context or social scene (Scott et al., 1998). Because social identity is performative, there must necessarily be a context in which to perform that identity. Moreover, because communication is a performance of social and cultural norms, identity performances are unique to the context in which they are performed (Carbaugh, 1996). Organizations and the relationships within them create unique social scenes in which individuals enact their identities.

Ashforth and Mael (1989) argue that individuals' identities can in part be derived from organizations themselves as well as various subgroups within organizations (e.g. workgroup, department, union, cohort, etc.). Academia provides many different levels of identification for individuals working within the higher education system. Academia offers various institutional levels based on attributes, such as research foci, land-grant status, liberal arts emphasis, etc., which creates an organizational culture for each campus. From there, one may further identify with their discipline, department, research methodology, rank, faculty unions, tenure status ,and many diverse sub-groups not explicitly named here. While many individuals identify with their organization, depending on the field, individuals may identify more with the profession of academia as a whole, rather than with one's institution of higher education or employer (Russo, 1998).

Professionalism is the enactment of a particular social identity outside the scope of any particular type of occupation (Adams, 2012). The rise of professionalism beyond the workplace enforces and reinforces neoliberal discourses of obedient, entrepreneurial workers through the enactment of five subjectivities: commodified professional, embodied professional, performative professional, for-profit professional, and archived professional (Adams, 2012).

First, the commodified professional encourages individuals to view themselves as a brand to be packaged, molded and sold to hopefully the highest bidder. Commodified professionals construct identities that are informed by discourses of the entrepreneurial self (Gill & Ganesh, 2007), which sees one's identity as an entrepreneurial project in the marketplace. Academics are encouraged to construct their expertise in entrepreneurial ways that develop a personal brand for their areas of expertise. Colleges and universities can then lay claim to faculty expertise, which is often commodified in the marketplace of ideas.

The embodied professional communicates the appropriate nonverbal communication to be enacted through the body of a person (Adams, 2012). Not only does an embodied professional concern the dress of the person, but also the ways in which the physicality of the person and emotional displays are coded as performances of professionalism. Queer and feminine embodiments are typically marginalized through these discourses as "unprofessional" (Adams, 2012). Traditional codes of masculinity are used to reinforce social class structures through the feminization of certain types of work. Professions that require the body to perform the work such as traditional blue-collar jobs, are often devalued socially and economically in comparison to those that require the higher order work of the mind which relies on the interpretation and production of texts (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007; Dougherty, 2011). Thus, the ways in which bodies are perceived as more or less professional is ironically determined by the extent to which the body is not physically involved in the production of labor. The embodied professional is not only influenced by social class and gender, but "these images are profoundly raced as well" (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007).

Related to the embodied professional, the performative professional fosters mimetic performances of professionalism. A mimetic performance is "an attempt by individuals, occupations and organizations to replicate the social, moral and political power of established professions" (Adams, 2012, p. 329). Employees are being trained to communicate professionalism in a way that aligns with Western ideology that can lead to cultural self-alienation and emotional labor. When accents, dialects, names, and emotional displays are changed to conform to a more Western presenting communication form, workers have little choice in their work subjectivity. Often, ideas about "being" professional, is actually expecting people to perform whiteness (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007). This is especially true for those

entering the world of academia where many of the institutions in the United States were created for and by white people (Allen, 2011).

The for-profit professional privileges for-profit orientations and subjectivities. As the dominant perspective, those in for-profit sectors set the standard for how to engage in the commodification of the professional self. However, for those in the non-profit sector, the rules of professionalism are not the same. While workers in non-profit sectors may feel pressured to enact the same neoliberal ideology as other professionals, they are encouraged instead to set aside their self-interests in the name of professionalism (Meisenbach, 2008). As we look into the enactment of an academic identity, this particular tension is especially important. Often academics are expected to do the unpaid labor of additional service because that is what it means to be a "good academic."

Finally, the archived professional, or the "memory of 'being professional' lives on as an archived subjectivity long after leaving a particular job. The professional, as a general mode of subjectivity, marks the body and social memory in material ways" (Adams, 2012, p. 338). Once one has been socialized into performing a particular type of professionalism, the subjectivity does not leave the body right away. Even after moving into a new context or sector, the deeply engrained ideology of professionalism stays with the individual. Thus, as graduate students are socialized to enact professional academic identities in certain ways, it begins to create an archive for them to go back to when they move onto a new institution to enact the professional identity in which they were previously trained.

Mentoring relationships offer a unique social scene into which both faculty mentors and graduate student protégés enact the social identity of academic. Not only does it allow the mentor the opportunity to perform their own identity as an academic, but it also provides opportunity for

the graduate student to learn how to become an academic. Thus, discourses about what it means to be a professional in this space through direct and indirect communication between mentor and protégé would provide insights into the professional identity of academics. Further, communication in professional relationships, such as that between mentors and protégés, are likely guided by politeness norms, which is explained via Goffman's (1967) politeness theory addressed below.

Politeness Theory

Mentoring relationships require ongoing social interaction that are full of complexities. Goffman (1967) proposed the notion of *face* as a way to interpret social interaction. Face is "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he [sic] has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self, delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (Goffman, 1967, p. 287). In other words, when interacting with one another, people strive to present themselves in a way that is socially acceptable and valued. Building on Goffman's (1967) notion of face, Brown and Levinson (1987) argued that face is emotionally invested, "and can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (p. 299). Individuals act in ways that attend to their goals of how they want to be perceived. Face is fundamentally a "social self" which is communicatively constructed through social interaction (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). The expectations for what constitute the social versus personal self is culturally determined based on the social expectations for what is appropriate for the optimal role performance in particular social interactions (Ting-Tomey & Kurogi, 1998). Typically, people will interact in ways that not only maintain their face, but of others during interactions as well.

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed that face should be conceptualized into two different categories for an individual: positive and negative face. *Positive face* is “the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). In other words, individuals *want* to be well-liked and perceived in generally positive ways, which would constitute their positive face. *Negative face*, on the other hand, is “the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). So, people also *want* to be able to act independently and have autonomy, which constitutes negative face. Both positive and negative face are relevant to mentoring relationships. For instance, protégés arguably want to be especially well liked by mentors (i.e., positive face) given the level of power, authority, and advocacy mentors can enact in organizational contexts. Further, many mentors likely enact mentoring with a particular level of autonomy (i.e., negative face) with a desire to cultivate the skillsets and careers of protégés as they deem appropriate.

Building upon the conceptions of positive and negative face, Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) proposed that within an interaction, there are various levels at which one can engage face based on the relationship. *Self-face* is a concern for one’s own image while *other-face* is the concern for another’s image. Because face is a fundamentally social self, it not only concerns the two (or more) individuals within the interaction, but also the relationship itself that is called into being through the interaction. Thus, *mutual-face* is “a concern for both parties’ images and/or the ‘image’ of the relationship” (Oeztzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Mutual-face is thus a combination of concern for the self- and other-face needs, while also potentially concerned about the relationship, and how others outside the relationship perceive it. The face concerns individuals have are influenced by their cultural orientations (e.g., collectivistic-individualistic; power

distance) and individual differences (e.g., independent-interdependent self-construal). Mentoring provides an opportunity to explore the various aspects of face concerns by exploring communication dynamics between mentors and protégés.

Facework constitutes the “clusters of communicative behaviors that are used to enact self-face and to uphold, challenge/threaten, or support the other person’s face” (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998, p. 190). Brown and Levinson (1987) describe this as showing respect for one another’s face wants. Respecting face wants of another person is a diplomatic declaration of good intentions (Brown & Levinson, 1987). When engaging in social interaction, “it is not a general requirement that an actor fully satisfy another’s face wants. Secondly, face can be, and routinely is, ignored, not just in cases of social breakdown (affrontery), but also in cases of urgent cooperation, or in interests of efficiency” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62). Politeness theory acknowledges that typically, people will communicate in ways to respect the face wants of the other person. However, it is not always possible to interact in a way that does not infringe on the face of the other – these are what Brown and Levinson (1987) refer to as face-threatening acts. Academic mentoring is situated within hierarchy that often dictates norms of respectful interaction, particularly as faculty mentors earn higher levels of rank throughout their careers. This can manifest in communication, for instance, through the use of honorifics like using doctor titles when addressing faculty members. However, respectful interaction does not always occur in social interaction, hence Brown and Levinson developed the notion of face threatening acts.

Face-Threatening Acts

Face-threatening acts (FTAs) “run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 301). FTAs can threaten speakers’ or addressees’ positive or negative face. Brown and Levinson (1987) breakdown different speech acts that

constitute face threats to negative and positive face. First, we will look at FTAs, which are directed towards the addressee. Acts that threaten addressees' negative face wants occur when speakers (potentially) indicate an infringement on addressees' freedom of action.

There are three subcategories of negative FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987). First, acts that require some future action of the addressee, or put pressure on the addressee to enact or refrain from some future action. Examples include orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, threats, warnings, and dares. Between mentors and protégés, mentors would be more likely to request tasks, offer advice, and make suggestions on work or behaving. Receptiveness to advice or suggestions has a direct and sizable effect on whether the recipient will act upon the advice (Paik, 2020). When it comes to personal and private problems, permitted advice yield more positive outcomes than volunteered advice (Van Swol, et al., 2017). While permitted advice is not necessarily actively sought out by the recipient, it is considered acceptable because within the bounds of the relationship, a "normative context of advice" has been established previously (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997, p. 457). Thus, navigating the context and building trust throughout the relationship is an important factor in how the advice will be received by the recipient.

Second, the addressees' negative face wants could be threatened when the speaker predicates some positive future act of the addressee, thereby putting pressure on them to accept the request, and possibly incur a debt. These FTAs include offers and promises. Protégés could feel pressured to accept offers of help from mentors or to accept various opportunities like to participate in research teams or to teach a new class, for instance. The last subcategory of negative FTAs are those acts that establish a desire from the speaker toward the addressee or the addressee's belongings. In turn, the addressee then feels obligated to take action to protect the

object of the speaker's desire or to give it to the speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Examples of this type of FTA include compliments, expressions of envy or admiration, and expressions of strong (typically negative) emotions towards the addressee. All of these speech acts would threaten the negative face of the addressee. Compliments from mentors about the protégé's writing, for instance, would be a common example of this category.

Next, Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that FTAs can involve acts which threaten positive face wants of the addressee. Positive face wants are threatened when a speaker (potentially) indicates disregard for the addressee's feelings. Positive face can be threatened when the speaker has a negative evaluation of some aspect of addressees' positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Speech acts of this category would include expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt, ridicule, reprimands, accusations, insults, contradictions, disagreements, and/or challenges. For instance, negative feedback (Sias, 2009) from mentors would fit into this type of FTA. Each of these acts expresses some form of a challenge to the addressee's desires to be well-received and liked. Similarly, speakers can show that they do not care about or are indifferent to addressees' positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). These speech acts would include expressions such as irreverence, mentions of taboo topics, violent emotions, or even raising of dangerously emotional or divisive topics. This category could encompass all manner of interactions between mentors and protégés, including sexual advances (from either party), mis-gendering a party by using incorrect pronouns to refer to a person, or praising another protégé in front of others.

Alternatively, FTAs can threaten the negative and positive face wants of the speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987). As Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) point out, facework is not only concerned with the other person, but oneself as well. Avoiding conflict or uncomfortable

conversations is not always possible – especially when one is in a lower position of power. Thus, FTAs which threaten the speaker cannot always be avoided. Speakers will be more willing to engage in self-face violations when they have higher concerns for mutual- or other-face concerns (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998).

First, we will consider the ways in which FTAs can infringe on the *negative face wants* of the speaker. FTAs that would offend speakers' negative face would potentially include expressing thanks, acceptance of an apology, excuses, acceptance of offers, responses to addressees' faux pas, and unwilling promises and offers (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example, if a protégé accepts the offer from their mentor to watch a practice conference presentation, the protégé is agreeing to allow the mentor into the process of preparation and giving up an individually determined timeline. The protégé is now beholden to the mentor's time. Additionally, some acts would directly damage the *speaker's positive face*. These FTAs include apologies, acceptance of a compliment, breakdown of physical control over body (bodily leakage, stumbling, falling, etc.), self-humiliation, confessions, admissions of guilt or responsibility, and emotion leakage such as non-control of laughter or tears (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Emotional control is often perceived as professional behavior (Mumby & Putnam, 1992), thus, inappropriate emotional displays (Kramer & Hess, 2002) reflect negatively on the speaker and threaten negative face wants.

While Brown and Levinson (1987) separate out positive and negative face wants being threatened, it is possible that some FTAs will threaten both positive and negative face wants. For example, interrupting someone threatens the addressees' positive face by not cooperating in the conversation norms of turn-taking, as well as negative face wants by impeding addressees' capacity to speak freely. Moreover, depending on the interaction, both parties' face may be

threatened by the FTA, such as in a conflict (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). While it is heuristically useful to separate positive and negative face threats of both speakers and addressees, such violations often co-occur and are simultaneously negotiated within a single interaction. For instance, if a mentor suggests a change in their protégé's teaching strategy during a teaching observation and the protégé rejects that suggestion publicly in front of the class various face threats positive and negative may emerge from this interaction given the public display of the exchange.

Politeness Strategies

When people engage in FTAs, Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that there are strategies the speaker will take to reduce threat when avoidance is impossible. When considering how to best engage in an FTA, three factors that influence the strategy of the speaker based on the face wants: (1) to communicate the content of the FTA, (2) to be efficient or urgent, (3) to maintain the addressee's face to any degree. When evaluating these factors, unless the want to be efficient is greater than the want to maintain the addressees' face, the speaker will want to minimize the threat of the FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Figure 1 shows the possible strategies for communicating FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69). Each strategy will be described below.

A speaker can deliver FTAs either "on record" or "off record." When going on record, speakers unambiguously declare their communicative intention for the FTA. Afterwards, speakers can clearly be held accountable for their behaviors during the speech act. For example, a protégé may tell her mentor that she will finish the revisions on a paper by 5:00 p.m. on Friday (in doing so making a promise). At 5:00 p.m. on Friday, the mentor can unambiguously hold the protégé to that deadline. Going off record, on the other hand, creates "more than one

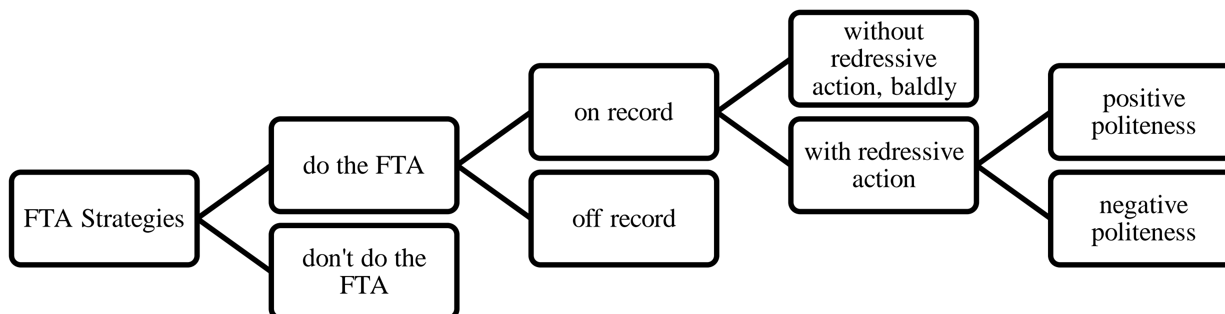

Figure 1: Possible Strategies for doing FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69).

unambiguously attributable intention so that the actor cannot be held to have committed himself [sic] so one particular intent" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69). So, if instead the protégé told her mentor that she would have the revisions done by the end of the week, there is ambiguity about when that would be. If the mentor assumed Friday at 5:00 p.m. would be the deadline, the protégé could push back and take the weekend to finish the revisions.

If a speaker must go on record, Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest two ways to do FTAs on record (a) speaking baldly, without redress, and (b) redressive action, which are reviewed below. First, doing the speech act baldly, without redress is the most direct and blunt strategy. When using this strategy, one is as unambiguous, clear, and concise as possible. This strategy requires speakers to have no fear of retribution from addressees. For instance, a mentor and protégé could be working together on a research paper. Upon reading the first draft of the protégé's work, the mentor believes the protégé needs to make extensive revisions to the writing to make it publishable. So, the mentor tells the protégé, "You will need to make significant revisions to make this manuscript ready for publication submission." There is no ambiguity in what the mentor is communicating. The message does not use mitigating language and is very concise. In this instance, because the mentor is in a higher position of power in relation to the protégé, there is little risk of retribution from the addressee in this interaction. In addition,

positions of power, speakers will use this approach when both parties agree that face demands are secondary to the urgency or danger of the situation (e.g. emergency situations); alternatively, going on-record without redress is used when the face threat is very small for the addressee because the FTA is in their interest and requires little sacrifice from the speaker (such as the above example). Thus, it is likely when engaging in advice-giving, a mentor could use this strategy to directly address the issue and clearly offer a path for moving forward.

In one study on advice-giving in mentoring relationships, Strong and Barron (2004) found that mentors were more likely to engage in giving indirect rather than direct advice to the new teacher protégés. Rather than engaging in formal direct advice giving, or going on record, the participants were more likely to engage in offering suggestions or indirect, off-record advice. As a result of the indirect form of communication, one-third of the protégés engaged in elaborated responses to the suggestions (Strong & Barron, 2004).

To the extent that speakers are concerned with other-face, they may be more likely to engage in redressive action. This strategy "attempts to counteract the potential face damage of the FTA by doing it in such a way, or with such modifications or additions, that indicate clearly that no such face threat is intended or desired" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 305). Speakers attempt to demonstrate they also have the same face needs as addressees. Speakers may attempt to maintain the positive and/or negative face of addressees' through various politeness strategies. Depending on when redressive modifications are implemented, it can influence the perceived sincerity of the redressive action. For example, when an apology was offered before giving advice, Van Swol et al. (2020) found that the recipient experienced more negative emotion towards the speaker. Thus, they conclude that by apologizing beforehand, it increases the awareness of the face-threatening act by the recipient.

So, if the mentor engages in this approach regarding the feedback for revisions, it is more likely to sound something like, "I know you put a lot of work into this paper, and you're on the right track. There are some big changes you will need to make before it is ready for submission. I know you can get the paper there based on previous work you've done." With this approach, the intended message is the same, but by affirming the work previously done and the work ethic of the student, the mentor is "giving-face" to the protégé (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Redressive action takes two forms: positive and negative politeness. According to Locher and Watts (2005) politeness is, "a discursive concept arising out of interactants' perceptions and judgments of their own and others' verbal behavior" (p. 10). *Positive politeness* is oriented towards the positive face of the addressee. Even though speakers are performing FTAs, they will still attempt to minimize the threat by appealing to addressees' positive face needs. This can be done by treating them as a member of the in-group, a friend, a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked – the goal is to demonstrate that the FTA is not a negative evaluation of addressees' face. Thus, the positive politeness version of the revisions feedback would potentially sound like, "You have made some smart connections between the literature and your findings. I know you are a really hard worker, and because of that, you will have no problem making these revisions to get it ready for submission." The goal of this message is to affirm and validate the aspects of the protégé's positive face as they relate to the academic identity involved in the interaction.

Alternatively, *negative politeness* is "essentially avoidance based, and realizations of negative-politeness strategies consist in assurances the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee's negative-face wants and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee's freedom of action" (p. 305). Negative politeness would potentially avoid a

conversation about the revisions all together. Instead, a mentor who took this approach may send an email to the student letting the student know feedback has been provided on the document and is available for review at the student's convenience. If mentors are concerned with flattening power differentials through a relational mentoring approach, they may be more likely to employ a positive and/or negative politeness strategies in performing an advice-giving FTA with their protégés.

Sociological Factors

To this point, I have discussed the reasons for engaging in an FTA at an individual level. Beyond the individual or situational concerns, Brown and Levison (1987) propose there are sociological factors that will also influence whether a speaker engages in an FTA: social distance, relative power, and ranking of the FTA in the wider cultural context (i.e. how socially acceptable the FTA is).

Social distance is "based on an assessment of the frequency of interaction and the kinds of material or non-material goods (including face)" exchanged between [the two parties]" (p. 77). Evaluation of social distance is based on relatively stable attributes of each party and leads to reciprocal giving and receiving of positive face. In the case of academic mentoring relationships, social distance could be affected by attributes like the rank of the faculty member or the longevity of the mentoring relationship.

Relative power is an asymmetrical social dimension of relative power, or the degree to which one can impose one's own plans and self-evaluation (face) at the expense of the other's plans and self-evaluation. Here, it is useful to consider the power distance implications proposed in Ting-Toomey & Kurogi's (1998) face-negotiation theory. Power distance is the "extent to which the less powerful members of institutions accept that power is distributed unequally"

(Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998, p. 194). Thinking about the power distance as a spectrum from low power distance to high power distance, cultures range from more symmetrical to asymmetrical distributions of power (Hofstede, 1991). Within organizations, low power distance means that subordinates expect to be consulted and the boss engages in democratic communication styles. Alternatively, in high power distance organizations, "the power of an organization is centralized in the upper management level. Subordinates expect to be told what to do, and the ideal boss plays the benevolent autocratic role" (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998, p. 194). Thus, depending on the organization's orientation towards power, the politeness strategies engaged by members of the organization will differ according to the organizational culture. For low power distance cultures, in supervisor-subordinate conflicts, high-status members tend to use verbally-direct (on-record, bald face) facework strategies to induce compliance, while low-status members were more likely to use self-face defensive strategies to recover face loss (Fairhurst et al., 1984). Alternatively, the same study found that high power distance cultures influenced supervisor-subordinate conflicts when high-status members engaged in verbally-indirect facework strategies (redressive positive and negative politeness) to induce compliance. Low-status members of high-power distance cultures are more likely to use self-effacing strategies and self-criticism to accept face loss, rather than resist it (Fairhurst et al., 1984). Thus, depending on the orientation to power and relative status within the organization, individuals will vary in how they choose to engage facework or politeness strategies. Academic mentoring is imbued with elements of relative power that are affected by norms specific to discipline, program structures/systems, as well as evaluation processes between mentors and protégés.

Finally, speakers consider the *cultural rankings* of the impositions created by engaging in FTAs by "the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent's wants of self-

determination or of approval" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 77). Depending on the cultural orientations towards the expenditure of services and goods are evaluated in proportion to performing the FTA. Essentially, the speaker is performing a cost-benefit-analysis of violating the face of oneself or the other person based on the cultural evaluation of the outcomes of the performance. The situational determinations of cultural valuing of payoff for engaging in the FTA will change based on the number of people present, the size of the request, type of request, and norms of the relationship which have been previously established. Cultural nuances that are likely to influence mentoring relationships may emerged from departmental culture, disciplinary norms, and campus life.

These three sociological factors often converge and overlap in the considerations for politeness of the speaker. For example, in group training evaluations and feedback sessions, Copland (2011) demonstrated authority and context influenced who had power to interrupt, ask questions and what was considered "legitimate talk." Unsurprisingly, trainees were less likely to engage in face-threatening speech acts than the trainer. Certain expectations are situationally negotiated through the co-construction of politeness in each individual interaction. While one may be able to violate the face of another in one context, it may not be appropriate or possible in another context. It is through communication that social relations are negotiated and maintained. Thus, using politeness theory offers continued insight into the ways in which social relationships are established, negotiated and maintained in organizations. This theory provides an insightful framework with which to examine mentoring relationships.

Research Questions

Mentoring can serve many purposes. Scholars have found that mentoring can be approached in a wide variety of ways. For the context of this study, I will be paying particular

attention to the formal mentoring relationships between graduate students and their faculty advisors because of the unique power dynamics and long-term nature of this relationship. Moreover, based on the literature cited above, we know that these relationships are often power laden, especially when engaging in face-threatening speech acts. Thus, to further explore the intersections of power, professional identity, and FTA's, I propose using politeness theory to explore the following research questions:

RQ1: How, if at all do, mentors/protégés accounts of FTAs reveal their considerations of the other party's face needs?

RQ2: How do mentors/protégés perceive their face needs were met and/or threatened during accounts of FTAs?

RQ3: How do mentors/protégés communicate, enact or perform their academic identity in mentoring relationships?

The following chapter explains the methodology and methods used to answer these questions.

Chapter Three: Methodology

To answer the questions proposed above, this study used phenomenology. In simplest terms, phenomenology is the study of lived experiences in the lifeworld (van Manen, 2016). The goal of phenomenological research is to gain a deeper understanding of everyday experiences and attempt to offer insights into experiences through description and interpretation. Unlike other approaches to human science, phenomenology is grounded in reflection upon experiences. Lived experiences, according to van Manen (2016) have a temporal structure which means the experience "can never be grasped in its immediate manifestation but only reflectively as a past presence" (p. 36). In the moment of a conversation happening between a mentor and protégé, for example, it is just a conversation. Once that conversation is recalled and given further consideration by either party, it then becomes an "experience" with hermeneutic significance.

Communication is what transforms everyday living into a lived experience. Because of language, van Manen (2016) argues, "we are able to recall and reflect on experiences" (p. 38). Lived experiences gain hermeneutic significance through interpretive activities like meditations, conversations, daydreams, and inspirations (van Manen, 2016). Communicative acts transform a lived experience into something significant for consideration – the experience itself then becomes a text for analysis.

Textualization of lived experiences happens through "human science research" (van Manen, 2016, p.38), which involves the dual process of both phenomenology and hermeneutical study of human existence. The process through which one can "mine the meaning" (van Manen, 2016, p. 38). from lived experiences is influenced by hermeneutical approaches to textual analysis. Van Manen (2016) explained that hermeneutics are "the interpretive study of the expressions and objectifications (texts) of lived experience in the attempt to determine the

meaning embodied in them" (p. 38). Thus, through this process, all experiences can be documented or textualized. In sum, van Manen (2016) concludes, "if all experience is like a text, then we need to examine how these texts are socially constructed. Interpretation that aims at explicating the various meanings embedded in a text may then take the form of socially analyzing or deconstructing the text and thus exploding its meanings" (p. 39). Therefore, below, I describe the process used to collect, analyze, and interpret the qualitative data for this research in hopes of mining its meanings (van Manen, 2016).

This phenomenological research was combined with a phronetic approach. Tracy (2013) claims that a phronetic approach "suggests that qualitative data can be systematically gathered, organized, interpreted, analyzed, and communicated so as to address real world concerns" (p. 4). Following this approach, this study offers insights into the current practices of mentors as they work with their protégés in the academic setting specifically, but also in a variety of organizational contexts generally. Fostering meaningful and productive mentoring relationships is important for the success of not only the individual goals of the graduate student, but also contributes to the success of the graduate program as a whole. Thus, this study offers not only theoretical insights into politeness theory by connecting it to literature on workplace identity demonstrating how identity is theoretically manifest in communicative processes, but also offers practical applications for those in mentoring relationships.

Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with both faculty mentors and graduate student protégés. Interviews were conducted one-on-one and no dyadic groupings were identified within the participants groups. These interviews asked the mentors to talk about their own experiences and approaches to providing advice to their own protégés. Protégé research

participants were asked about their own experiences receiving feedback and advice from their mentors. Mentor research participants were asked about giving feedback and advice to protégés. The interviews intentionally explored face-threatening communication or speech acts (FTAs). While it would be preferable to witness these conversations firsthand, given the confidential nature of the mentoring relationships, these conversations typically happen privately in one-on-one settings. Thus, the interviews provided a way to explore the role of intervention and redress conversations from mentors' and protégés' point of view.

Questions addressed topics such as: mentoring style, offering/receiving feedback (both solicited and unsolicited), emotion when delivering/receiving feedback, and creating boundaries within the relationship. Example questions include: (1) What is the role of mentoring in your department? (2) Tell me about a time when you gave/received feedback. (3) Tell me about a time when you had a mentee who was not meeting your expectations, (4) What did you say to them?, or (5) What is the best advice you've ever received from your mentor? For the full list of interview questions, see interview protocols in Appendices A – B. Appendix A is the interview protocol for mentors while appendix B is the interview protocol for protégés.

This study is particularly interested in the asymmetrical power-relationships of mentors and protégés within the university setting. Interviewing the mentors provided further insight into the ways in which a person in a higher power position approaches the face needs of those in lower power positions. The mentor is often the one who will initiate these conversations, so this position was an important starting point to investigate the phenomena of interest. On the other hand, perceptions of the strategies used by mentors is an important insight to be gained from protégés. Thus, 21 graduate student protégés and 19 faculty mentors (40 total) were interviewed to offer a comparative analysis of the phenomena.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted either on the telephone or via video conference with participants recruited through university networks. Participants were allowed to choose whether they would like to have their camera on during the video call of the interview. Approximately half of the participants chose to keep their cameras turned on during the interview. Participants who chose to turn off their cameras seemed to be more comfortable sharing, which may have fostered stronger rapport and been less face threatening.

I selected a semi-structured approach, rather than more rigid interview structures, because it gives the researcher the power needed to guide the interview process and probe areas of interest, but still leaves the interview open enough for the participant to guide and choose what to disclose (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Interviews began with rapport building questions that broadly asked participants to reflect on their own experiences with mentoring. From there, I transitioned into the questions about face threatening speech acts and emotion. Because data collection occurred during Spring 2021, many of the participants were engaging in work-from-home and other social distancing practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the home-life (e.g. pets, partners, family members, deliveries) were often a part of the interviews and created spontaneous moments of rapport building. My own positionality was also an influence on the rapport building and interview process as well. I identify as a white, cis-gendered, middle-class, heterosexual woman. I was a graduate student at the time of data collection, it was much easier to build rapport with those that I shared an in-group identity (graduate student protégés) rather than those participants who were faculty mentors.

Eligibility criteria of mentor participants included mentors who were (1) in a formal mentoring role with graduate students and (2) had experienced mentoring at least five students through the completion of their program. This criterion was determined in order to ensure

mentors would have enough experience with mentoring graduate students from which they could discuss their experience. Eligibility criteria for protégé, graduate student participants included (1) the completion of at least three years of graduate school, (2) with at least one year spent working with their current mentor. Again, the goal of this criteria was to ensure that the protégé had enough experience being a graduate student, as well as with their current mentor. All participants were at least 18 years of age. No other criteria excluded participants from recruitment for the study.

Using university networks, discipline-based list servs and e-mail, as well as social media, recruitment focused on a maximum variation sample (Tracy, 2013) based on variation in academic discipline, gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, age, and ability. Efforts were made to recruit a variety of participants based on diversity of gender, race/ethnicity, age, social class background, and academic discipline. The goal of the maximum variation sample is to not only bring in voices from the margins which are typically not represented in studies on mentoring, but also to create a data sample which is robust in experiential subject matter. Where appropriate, snowball sampling (Tracy, 2013) was used to continue to gain participants. See Appendix C for recruitment materials.

A total of 40 interviews were conducted with 19 participants from the faculty mentor group and 21 from the graduate student protégé group. From the faculty mentor group, ages ranged from 36 years to 72 years old, with an average age of 49 years. Eight participants identified as male and eight participants identified as female, and one identified as non-binary. Fourteen faculty participants identified as White/Caucasian , 3 identified as Black or African American, and 2 identified with multiracial backgrounds. Faculty members ranged in

occupational status from Associate Professor to full Professor, and some participants reported dual positions including Associate Dean, Department Chair, and Directors of Graduate Studies.

For the graduate student protégé group, ages ranged from 24 years to 50 years old, with an average age of 36. Thirteen participants identified as female and eight identified as male. Nine participants identified as White/Caucasian, seven identified as Black/African American, the remaining four participants identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, multiracial, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian or Alaskan Native, respectively. Participant roles ranged from graduate student to research assistant/teaching assistant at the protégé level.

In order to protect the identities of participants the following demographic information will describe the participants as a whole rather than by participant group. Participants came from a variety of fields of study including Statistics, Cognitive Science, Communication, Sociology, Mass Communication & Journalism, Public Administration, Education, Literature, Social Work, Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, Physics, and Geography. Based on the concerns of participants being identified based on discipline, general labels (e.g. social science, natural science, humanities) are used as participants are quoted in the findings rather than specific fields of study (unless self-identifying field-specific information was shared in a quotation). The identity of the participants was protected by using self-selected pseudonyms.

Interviews were an hour and 17 minutes on average, based on the amount of information shared by the interviewee. The longest interview lasted one hour and 39 minutes and the shortest was 45 minutes long. With the permission of the participant, all interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed for analysis. In total, 39 hours and 48 minutes of interviews were transcribed into 710 single space pages for analysis. All participants reviewed an information statement and consent to the study online via Qualtrics online survey technology (Appendix D),

acknowledging their voluntary participation in the study and approval of audio recording for the interview. Demographic information was also collected at the time of consent (Appendix E) via the Qualtrics online survey tool. All data – transcriptions, interview notes, audio recordings – were saved using pseudonyms and stored on a password protected computer. Third party professional transcriptionists transcribed the interviews. The transcriptionists provided a non-disclosure confidentiality agreement.

Data Analysis

After completing interviews, I used an iterative, thematic approach to analyzing the data (Tracy, 2018). This process involved four general phases: data immersion, primary cycle coding, secondary cycle coding, and thematic analysis. As soon as researchers start collecting data, Tracy (2013) recommends beginning with data immersion by reading, re-reading, listening, and relistening to the data. By familiarizing oneself with data along the way, it can help researchers see which questions in interview protocol should be further probed and developed, and which questions could be eliminated (Tracy, 2018). Additionally, reviewing the data early in collection can help to expedite the analysis process. As one becomes more familiar with the data, she encourages researchers to also discuss initial findings and emerging themes with others to aid in sensemaking processes. It also gives the researcher a chance to obtain feedback earlier in the writing process (Tracy, 2018). The goal of all immersion activities is to "absorb and marinate in the data" (Tracy, 2013, p. 188). During this phase I took notes, and reflections, but reserved from judgement at this point. The goal in this phase was to think about "What is happening here?" (Creswell, 2007) to begin understanding the data.

Upon completing data collection, I began primary cycle coding (Tracy, 2013). Tracy (2013) points out that when taking a cycle approach, data may go through multiple rounds of

first-level coding. First-level codes focus on what is happening qualitatively in order to describe the process and basic activities occurring in the data (Tracy, 2013). These codes were generated based on descriptions of the data from myself and came from the data itself. In vivo codes "use the language and terms of participants themselves" (p. 190). This type of coding allowed the me to stay close to the lived experiences of the participants, which had been shared. During primary-cycle coding, Tracy recommends researchers stay open to multiple meanings and stories, which may emerge in the data. Tracy (2018) claims, "one of the great values of qualitative research is that it can alert researchers to issues or ideas that 'they did not know they did not know.' In other words, the empirical materials may reveal surprises that were never expected or intended" (p. 65).

During this phase (and throughout the entire coding process), I used constant comparative method to "compare the data applicable to each code, and they modify code definitions to fit new data (or else they break them off and create a new code)" (Tracy, 2013, p. 190). Using a constant comparative method is "circular, iterative, and reflexive" (p. 190). Consistently reviewing and revising codes and their working definitions ensured that the codes were being used consistently throughout the data.

After completing first-cycle coding, I began secondary-cycle coding. The secondary-cycle of coding is "where having a rich understanding of past theory and literature is useful" (Tracy, 2018, p. 66). When working with the emerging codes, Tracy (2013, 2018) recommends researchers begin the abduction process of going between emerging themes in the data and existing literature. When selecting concepts from existing literature, Tracy (2018) recommends that researchers select the codes that are "the most precise and appropriate for attending to the topic at hand" (p. 66). Because the present study is interested in FTAs and emotion, I

incorporated that literature into the codebook at this point of my analysis. Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) strategies for performing FTAs, as a starting point, this cycle of coding started to bring together the emerging data with the literature upon which I have situated the proposed research. While I planned to use this framework as part of analysis, it did not capture the full extent to which I understood what was happening in the data. It was during this phase that academic identity and neoliberal stigma (de Souza, 2019) emerged as important theoretical themes in the data.

During the secondary-cycle coding, I then moved onto the process of finding relationships between and among the codes. Secondary-cycle coding takes the previous codes created in the primary-cycle coding process and analyzes the ways in which they relate to create a major category. Tracy (2013) recommends that hierarchical codes be used to "systematically [group] together various codes under a hierarchical 'umbrella' category that makes conceptual sense" (p. 195). The purpose here was to synthesize, sort and organize the data and reassemble the codes and data in new ways after multiple cycles of coding (Creswell, 1998). From these major categories, I used the most significant as the major sections of my analysis based on salience in relation to my research questions. Data that was not salient and/or not pervasive across the data set was discarded from analysis (Driskill & Brenton, 2011).

Throughout analysis, Tracy (2018) strongly recommends that "researchers keep a frequently updated chronological list of their analysis practices" because it can be instrumental for "describing and justifying the analysis in later reports" (p. 71). To facilitate the coding process and manage codes as they emerged through the data, I created a qualitative codebook. This documented all the codes and their criteria in one place. Defining the codes helped to guide the coding process as each code was applied to compelling quotations in the data (Creswell,

2014). This process was completed electronically through the use of NVivo qualitative analysis software. NVivo offered a secure way to store the data and made the coding process more systematic, organized and simplistic enhancing data management.

To aid in my own analysis, I used analytic memos and loose outlines as I moved through the final cycles of coding. Analytic memos "ask the researcher to think carefully about key stories and meanings" (Tracy, 2018, p. 71). Analytic memos help researchers to find the key stories in the data and serve as an "intermediary step between coding and writing a draft of the analysis" (Tracy, 2013, p. 196). Analytic memos are the writing process that help a researcher go beyond the comparing and contrasting required for qualitative analysis; instead, this process helps to investigate and interpret phenomena of interest and participants' lived experiences.
In addition to the analytic memos, I created a loose analysis outline. This brainstorming activity (Tracy, 2018) begins with writing down the main purposes and research questions of the study. Then, under each question, noting the themes and arguments (from codebooks and analytic memos) that seem to initially answering the research questions. The loose analysis outline began the development of the findings, because "it helps researchers envision the journey before them, break up the task into manageable smaller chunks" (Tracy, 2018, p. 74). Moreover, the loose analysis outline assisted in discovering the major themes in the data. Phenomenological themes, according to van Manen (2016), "may be understood as the structures of experience" (p. 79). Therefore, when turning to the thematic analysis, this is the point at which the researcher begins looking for the "experiential structures that make up that experience" (p. 79) in the data. Thus, when outlining analysis of the data, experiential structures can be explored through the act of writing. From there, I began writing the findings of the study.

The credibility of the data was verified through thick description and multivocality (Tracy, 2010). Thick description is one of the most important means for achieving credibility in qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). Geertz (1973) first described thick description as involving an in-depth illustration that explicates culturally situated meanings. Any one action could have infinite meanings and interpretations if it is divorced from the context in which it was observed (Geertz, 1973). Therefore, to demonstrate the complexity of the data, Tracy (2010) advises researchers "to *show*, meaning that they provide enough detail that readers can come to their own conclusion about the scene" (p. 843, emphasis in original) rather than simply telling readers what they should interpret from the scene.

In addition to thick description, multivocality adds credibility to this study. Multivocality involves the "inclusion of multiple voices. This means analyzing social action from a variety of participants' points of view and highlighting divergent or disagreeable standpoints" (Tracy, 2013, p. 237). This study attends to the voices of both protégés and mentors accounting for multiple standpoints. Further, by utilizing a maximum variation sample, I present a variety of experiences that diverge from not only one another, but also from my own perspectives on the topic of mentoring. Tracy (2010) claims that multivocality creates empathetic understanding of divergent lived experiences within the same subject matter area.

The following chapter discusses the findings, which emerged from the methods of data analysis described in this chapter.

Chapter Four: Findings & Interpretation

Three major themes emerged from the analysis of the lived experiences of mentors and protégés in academia: (1) Setting boundaries and face threatening speech acts; (2) Academic identity and mentoring; and (3) Mentoring as praxis. In the first theme, Setting Boundaries and Face Threatening Speech Acts, participants described the ways in which mentors often set the terms of the relationship through implicit and explicitly communicated boundaries around time, communication media, and topics of conversation. In the second theme, Academic Identity and Mentoring, mentors and protégés constructed and enacted academic identities. It is by and through mentoring relationships that participants described the ways in which new academics were socialized into the professional identity. The second theme also, revealed that one's academic identity is often closely tied to one's social identities. The third theme, Mentoring as Praxis, explains how the disciplinary norms of mentors often inform how they approach mentoring graduate students. Building upon their academic identity, mentoring relationships were a way in which mentors could enact their epistemological commitments, axiological value systems, and disciplinary norms beyond the research they produce. Each theme is addressed below.

Setting Boundaries and Face Threatening Speech Acts

You can smoke your pot, just don't do it with your grad students – Hank Asher, faculty mentor

For participants, most mentoring relationships often begin with determining what the mentor is willing, able, and ought to do in terms of working with the protégé, which is inherently tied to boundary work. Determining boundaries and communicating those between one another is one of the ways in which participants engaged in face-threatening acts (FTAs) within the mentoring relationship. For some it was as simple as the quote stated above by one faculty

participant Hank Asher, "you can smoke your pot, just don't do it with your graduate students." Hank Asher points out there must be some sort of boundary work when it comes to faculty working with graduate students. Boundary work involves negotiating the socio-cognitive borders between permeable cultural categories (Clark, 2000). Through communication, individuals work to reproduce and challenge boundaries from no distinction between contexts (e.g. work and private life) to a rigid segmentation of worlds (Nippert-Eng, 1996). In this theme, I discuss the ways in which communicating boundaries revealed how participants revealed their considerations of the other party's face needs, and how their own face needs were met and/or threatened during boundary setting conversations.

Mentors: Setting the Terms

For many of the participants, boundaries regarding topics of conversation, levels of engagement with one another, and relational closeness was determined in large part by the mentor. According to one participant, Adelric a professor of social science, the primary responsibility of working with graduate students means putting the wellbeing and success of the graduate student first.

> In social work practice, we would say the very nature of developing a relationship, we would call that a fiduciary relationship. So, my job is to make sure that the best interests of the student are put first. It's not about me and it should not be about getting my needs met. If it is, that's a problem.

Here, Adelric points out some important overarching boundaries to be set on the nature of the relationship between mentor and graduate student protégé. From this perspective, it is students' needs that should be met through mentoring interactions, not faculty members' needs. Thus, from this perspective, when interacting with graduate students, the face needs of students should

be top of mind as mentors interact and communicate with their protégés.

That being said, there are often ways in which mentors still set boundaries that preserve a level of respect for the negative face of mentors as well. For example, social identity presented a unique factor that contributes to negotiating boundaries for many of the participants in this study. Social identity was an active part of their boundary negotiation within mentoring relationships. Alex, a professor in social science, discussed the importance of setting formal boundaries with all of his students,

> I try to maintain somewhat clear boundaries in terms of personal space, personal life, work-life balance, and so forth. And so, um, I tried to, with all of my grads with whether they're a mentor and advisee or not, I tried to uphold those, those, those sort of, um, those boundaries. And I know the couple of reasons why the main reason why is because of my own identity as a, um, a racial minority faculty member in the sense that I, what I find is that, um, sometimes with, um, non-minority or the dominant culture or the dominant identities, if you don't maintain certain of my relationship of working with, with both individuals, if you don't maintain these boundaries, um, it becomes very unclear, very vague, very fuzzy. And then actually, that can be problematic in terms of respect in terms of, uh, how you view me as a subcommittee member, um, how you're sort of engaging and interacting with, with our programs.

As a professor of color, Alex found that engaging in boundary work with graduate students was not important only for the benefit of the student, but also for his own face needs. In order to maintain his negative and positive face with graduate students, it is important for him to maintain some relational distance. Otherwise, in his opinion, students are more likely to lose respect and engage with him differently due to his racial social identity.

Setting boundaries manifest in a variety of ways. Regulating appropriate topics of conversation is another area around which faculty create boundaries. Sophia, a professor in social science, pointed out,

> I try not to talk too much about faculty politics. So when things are going on in the department that students really aren't involved in and shouldn't know about, I don't do that. Sometimes, I will say, 'There's some disagreement about X, Y, Z,' but I'm very careful not to go into it. On one hand, I feel like graduate students need to know if some of those behind-the-scenes things happen. On the other hand, I don't want to grad students to feel uncertain or bogged down by things that are happening in the department that they have no control over.

Knowing what topics to divulge to graduate students, and which ones are beyond their organizational role is an important boundary to draw for Sophia. On the one hand, Sophia wants to create a sense of stability for graduate students, and yet when negative face issues of autonomy are involved, she shies away from disclosing office politics to graduate students.

Putting parameters on the time and space in which mentors are willing to engage with their graduate students was also one way in which they would create boundaries within the relationship. For example, Ron, professor in social science, explained,

> So, I pretty much don't interact evenings and weekends. I don't know if you saw my signature, my e-mail says as much. Now, my graduate students know that if they need me, totally I'm going to be there for them. But they also have a sense that that's not my norm. So, when I do help them out or grab a phone call on a Saturday morning they know it's a really big deal that I'm doing that, and that's the way I would have it because that's not what I want to do most of the time. So that's one big boundary, just time in the day.

> And they'll apologize.

Ron puts boundaries on the time that students are typically permitted to interact with him, creating expectations of how and when the interactions between professor and student can occur, which is another approach of creating boundaries. Ron also establishes when boundaries can be violated, because as Ron states, "if they need me, totally I'm going to be there for them" the expectation is that the violation of the professor's negative face, or autonomy during off work hours, is something students should apologize for in his mentoring relationships. This indicates that politeness norms are expected in communication, in this case via apologies, if established boundaries are crossed.

Socializing with graduate students off-campus was a boundary many faculty participants mentioned. From sharing hotel rooms during conference travel and happy hour drinks to only meeting on campus during office hours, each faculty member negotiated mentoring access in personalized ways. Some faculty seemed to recognize the importance of professionalization that comes from more informal interactions with graduate students. For instance, Jill, a humanities professor, noted that socializing with graduate students away from campus not only breaks down the barriers felt in the classroom, so students are more engaged in their studies, but also,

> I think of that partly as professional training too, because I think so many times students, they get so worked up about talking to people or they don't know enough or those insecurities and this profession, if they're going into academia, requires to be able to think of questions on the fly at a talk or create small talk at little cocktail parties after readings or whatever it might be. And so, I do think that those are valuable skills to have. And so, I try to just to make sure it's groups so that there's not any kind of problems of folks that might happen with a one-on-one.

According to Jill, not only does socializing away from campus allow students to feel more collegial and willing to engage in questions in the classroom as they are being intellectually trained, it also gives protégés the opportunity to practice the important skills of networking during a cocktail party that will inevitably happen when students present job talks, share research, or even attend conferences. Interesting to note though, is that even in creating this opportunity for informal learning, Jill makes sure that it happens in groups, "so that there's not any kind of problems of folks that might happen with one-on-one." So, even in this instance when she creates a wider breadth of relational boundaries in off campus spaces, Jill still is maintaining boundaries by avoiding socializing one-on-one with graduate students.

As faculty mentors discussed the range of ways they created boundaries, across the interviews that each faculty member did engage in *some* form of boundary creation and negotiation. For some faculty this meant creating times of the day and week where they were unavailable to students, for others it was how they socialized with students off campus as part of their mentoring. Whatever the individual preferences maybe, it was clear that boundaries of some sort were important to the mentor-protégé relationship for academics. In the next section, I will turn my attention to the ways that protégé participants perceived and negotiated boundaries in mentoring relationships.

Student Protégés: Making Sense of Mentor's Boundaries

Graduate student participants noted the ways they let their mentors set the tone for the boundaries of their mentoring relationships. April, a graduate student in natural science, mentioned, "I kind of just let her tell me what she's going to tell me, and that kind of forms what I feel comfortable telling her." Similarly, Arya, a social science graduate student, mentioned that her advisor has kept things distanced. They rarely met outside of the office so to speak.

However, given the changing nature of the pandemic, some of the previous boundaries were adapted, "During the pandemic, he texted me once and then I realized, okay, maybe it's ok for me to text him. So, now sometimes we would text back and forth. If there is a pressing issue that you need to take care of right away, but that's about it." These two exemplars point out the ways in which protégés perceive their mentors setting boundaries and then make sense of those boundaries. Based on the boundaries set by mentors and mentors communication behavior, protégés typically stay within those communication expectations. For both April and Arya, mentors set the tone for what topics could be discussed, as well as what medium of communication was appropriate. It was not until Arya's advisor texted her first that she realized it was acceptable to engage in that medium as well. Consistent with Kramer (1994) findings, the newer members of this profession, the graduate students, were more likely to engage in passive information-seeking behaviors rather than proactive communication behaviors of those that are more familiar with the profession. Moreover, the protégés are engaging in observation of mentor's behaviors to learn what is appropriate within the bounds of the relationship.

In addition to observation, some mentors give their protégés direct communication about boundaries in finding balance between work and other responsibilities. Audrey, a social science graduate student, points out the explicit messages her mentor gave her about setting aside time for other priorities:

> [James] has always been very intentional with me about my mental health and prioritizing personal time and is so considerate. When he knows my family is in town, he sent me an email before and he's like, "If your family's in town, please ignore this email and enjoy time with them." He's just very conscientious of all that kind of stuff, which has actually made me be like, I'm with my family right now. [James] wouldn't want me

> to be working, which is so different than what a lot of other people would experience where it's like, oh, I should be working for my advisor right now.

Through direct communication about boundaries, Audrey's mentor set boundaries about when to spend time on work versus when to focus on social and familial commitments, which creates space for Audrey to maintain negative face. Hence, Audrey does not feel guilty for spending time with her family instead of working. Creating space for autonomy, not just in the workplace, but to be a whole person with a full scope of relationships beyond the mentor-protégé is an important boundary to be maintained by both the mentor and protégé.

Mentors also helped their protégés create boundaries within the workplace as well. When it comes to thinking through the nuances of how much time and effort to spend on one project, that can be a tricky negotiation for novice academics. Upon receiving a teaching release as part of a research assistantship, David Gilmour, a humanities graduate student, was required to give a short presentation to the college to discuss the research he was able to accomplish with the time he no longer needed to dedicate to teaching. David Gilmour's advisor was able to help him decide how much time to spend on the presentation with the following insights:

> We had a nice frank talk about how much effort I should put into it, which was not a lot. I think the advice was like, "Do enough work that you don't embarrass yourself or me, but don't do anything more than that." It's like 1% of submitters get an, "attaboy" and that's about it. It's just an utter waste. We all phoned it in, particularly now during COVID...Like, 'No, I'm not spending four hours putting together a two-minute video with jump cuts about my dissertation. No, I'm not doing that.'

Knowing what projects are worth a high level of attention versus a low level of attention is a more nuanced way of thinking about maintaining face. In this example, David Gilmour is

negotiating between negative face wants of autonomy of time, not wanting to spend more time than he needs to on this one small presentation on the one hand, and then on the other, the positive face needs of both himself *and* his advisor by doing enough work to not "embarrass yourself or me." This exemplar points out that in academic mentoring relationships, often the positive face of one party is directly connected to the positive face perceptions of the other. If the mentor has a good reputation in the field, that halo effect is bestowed upon their advisees. The relationship between mentor and protégé in academia is asymmetrically power-laden such that the faculty member often has more influence on the reputation of the graduate student and more capacity to infringe on the face wants of the protégé than vice versa. For example, should the faculty member's reputation take a turn for the worse, that can also influence the positive face of the protégé. The reputation of the mentor can also be somewhat impacted by the performance of the protégé. When the protégé is perceived positively in the field and campus community, that reflects on the mentor. Alternatively, a failure on the part of the protégé can be attributed to a failure on a lack of proper training and preparation from the mentor. Ultimately, the reputation and positive face of the mentor is what will have the greatest impact on the protégé moving forward throughout their career. Thus, the power of the mentor to maintain positive face has more stake for not only the mentor, but also the graduate student.

So far, the participants' experiences have demonstrated the ways in which the mentor typically sets the terms of the relationship when it comes to boundaries. Both the faculty members and graduate students recognized that often it is the burden of the advisor to set those expectations. Moreover, because graduate students are more likely to engage in passive communication approaches to information seeking, it creates space for the advisor to set the terms of the relationship through implicit messages. One space in which both graduate students

and mentors engaged in more nuanced boundary work was when social identity emerged as part of the relationship. These nuances will be discussed in the next section.

Blurred Lines: Setting Boundaries as Self-Preservation

While many participants were able to discuss the clear boundaries of mentoring relationships, often the lines of boundaries were blurred. While some mentors created clear boundaries for topics, relational closeness, or time and space for their relationships with mentees, others made those boundaries more permeable. When they were more flexible with boundaries, students could be more open with their advisors. For example, Huey Newton, a Black graduate student in social science talked about the importance of being able to fully invite his advisor into his life:

> …the less I feel like I have to hide, the better our relationship and the better my work. So, I have real conversations about things that happen in my life with my advisor, but it's only because they have gotten that level of trust from me. I said earlier, I'm comfortable with telling my advisor how I feel about that. And that could be damaging for a lot of people. I know students that have been like, "Oh, I didn't feel he really supported me in this endeavor." And their advisor treats them like shit for the next four years.

By fully inviting his advisor in, Huey mentions he is able to have a better working relationship with his advisor because they can have "real conversations." Building the trust between one another demonstrates there is mutual respect for one another's positive and negative face fostering a relationship in which Huey can bring his full-self to the table. He later shared that it was important to establish this type of openness with his advisor because they were able to have real conversations about things happening in his life as a Black father of two young Black boys, in the world of police brutality and Black Lives Matter. Events that may be otherwise external to

his work as a graduate student were having a very real impact on his capacity to work. Other graduate students of color also expressed the ways in which the larger social events of the world were influential in their life experiences. Thus, it is important for some graduate students of color to have a wider range of vulnerability and permeable boundaries when they perceive their advisor to be a safe person to express those experiences that can be face-threatening for one or both parties. Huey notes the risk that students take when they risk being fully open with their advisors when he mentions that this level of openness can be damaging.

Concerns about the mental health of graduate students often created more complicated approaches to setting boundaries. As Huey Newton's experience demonstrates, graduate students do not work in a silo. The world beyond campus (and often on campus) influences the capacity a student has for the work they are doing. So, to address some of these issues, Carmen, a professor of social science, offers a more nuanced approach to engaging students at their level, while still maintaining appropriate boundaries:

> So, when it comes to my students, in terms of let's start with like personal problems, things that I would put in that realm, whether it be any kind of struggle, you know, which is pretty much everything outside of school, [laughs] but any of those struggles, I listened to them. I try to offer supports. I offer resources when I know that this resource or that resource is going to be helpful. I make sure to give permission for them to take that space for them to take care of what their needs are. I'm very supportive of that. I tried to get bring that perspective back 'cause you can really lose that perspective in graduate school where it's all consuming as is the most important thing in the entire world. I can't miss class, or I can't do that. So, I try to bring that perspective and remind them of that because you can't move forward when you're in a particular state or when you have these

> things where these worries weighing down, but demand attention. What I don't do is try to solve their problems for them.

Carmen is more than willing to be sympathetic to the struggles of graduate school. She takes a position of open and supportive listening, a willingness to validate the emotional struggles that graduate students experience, and then goes a step further to offer resources to assist with whatever that struggle may be. Carmen does not put a requirement that the problem only be related to a student's program of research. Rather, she is open to the full range of human experiences that any student will face during their years of graduate school. However, the important line of face-negotiation for her and the other party is that she notes that she does "solve their problems for them." Meaning, she will give the support and resources, but she is not going to be the one to solve the personal problems of her students, maintaining the autonomy of her own time and capacity for work, as well as the autonomy of her students to take ownership in their own self-efficacy.

Creating boundaries is not only to protect the mental health of the graduate student, but often is a way of protecting the mental health of the faculty members as well. The COVID-19 pandemic, as mentioned previously, made many mentors and their protégés renegotiate previously established boundaries. Those that could previously rely on time and physical space boundaries were suddenly faced with a new reality where "time meant nothing" as Professor Hank Asher (humanities) described their past year with COVID. From the increased demands of their position as the Director of Graduate Studies, Hank Asher was at their breaking point:

> This last year has murdered me. I just tendered my resignation as DGS yesterday. I'm done. I can't do it anymore. And it's not because I don't love our graduate students it's because I do. I don't think I'm doing a good job. I'm normally a compassion-rich person

> and right now I'm a compassion-poor person. I think all of us have just really weathered a lot. … The number of crises, it's just been, I can't. It's been too much. And I appreciate that they [graduate students] see us as a resource and we want to be that resource that can help them, but we can't be the only resource. And they feel very empowered to tell us what they need and they get very frustrated when we don't heed it very quickly or see a ton of work toward meeting their need. … And so, it gets frustrating that there doesn't feel there's a ton of compassion there sometimes or patience there sometimes. And I get it because for them it's a real-life issue that's impacting their lives very significantly in that moment and the solution sometimes seems so easy, but it's rarely easy when you're working within such a complex system as a grad program in a university.

Hank's experience demonstrates various tensions a faculty mentor is grappling with as they engage in mentoring graduate students. First, there's a tension between being compassionate to the needs and struggles of graduate students and being compassionate to the needs and struggles of one's own experience. Being too available or too compassionate made Hank Asher feel burnt out to the point that they resigned from their position as DGS. The second tension described by Hank is between empowering the graduate students to advocate for themselves and the time it takes to come through on those requests. Faculty members are often overworked under typical circumstances; the demands of a tenure-track position to perform successfully across teaching, research, and service is enough to keep anyone busy. Add on top of those demands, a pandemic, and graduate students advocating for immediate changes in the department, it's enough to make anyone feel like a "compassion-poor" person. Finally, the last tension described here between the face needs of the graduate students and the face needs of the faculty members. When setting

boundaries, both party's face needs are inherently threatened due to the nature of making a request. While previous exemplars talked about the ways in which both parties attempt to reduce the threat to preserve the mutual face of the relationship, Hank's experience seems to be more one-sided. The graduate students, in Hank's perception, are not willing to offer the same level of compassion the faculty are extending to the students.

Establishing boundaries is not always an easy task. When boundaries are blurry, it can create opportunities for more authentic engagement between the mentor and protégé. Yet, when creating a more open relationship, it also invites more opportunity for those boundaries to be exploited. Because faculty members have more power within the organization, and thus within the relationship, they have more power to set the terms of the relationship. While strict boundaries may seem uncompassionate towards students, it leaves the mentor space to practice self-compassion.

As mentors and their protégés negotiate the boundaries within their relationships, it develops the context in which many participants communicate their professional academic identity. This process is discussed in the next section.

Academic Identity and Mentoring: The Field of Intellectual Production

For participants, mentoring is a key part of how they express their academic identity as faculty members of higher education institutions. Yet, the ways in which they choose to engage that identity varies based on discipline, institutional type (e.g. R1, R2, Teaching), tenure with the organization, and epistemological commitments. Moreover, for graduate student participants, mentoring outside of official classroom spaces is often where both explicit and implicit messages about professionalism in the academy is communicated. As participants discussed their experiences with mentoring, they revealed how messages communicated through their mentoring

relationships reflect, reinforce, challenge, and/or transform their own understandings of what it means to be an academic.

Becoming an Academic: Professional Socialization

"It's not just about getting a degree, it's about transforming yourself, too." – Adelric, Professor

Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences with mentoring. They often revealed the ways in which graduate students are socialized into an academic profession. While graduate students are taught about subjects related to their academic discipline in the classroom, it is typically communication outside classrooms where the mentor-protégé relationship solidifies one's professional socialization into the academy. For example, when faculty members engage graduate students in research projects, graduate students have the potential to learn the nuances of executing research from IRB approval to final publication. One faculty member, Alex, professor in social science, observed that,

> The research skills and research mentorship that I received as a grad student, that from my mentors and oftentimes these occur outside of class. So, these are the things that you don't get during formal curricular or formal, um, pedagogy and teaching, or learning experiences. And so, what I do, I try with these collaborations that we have, me and my mentees, uh, tried to offer, praise or, or just convey positivity or positive praise, to anything regarding his [Alex's protégé] research activities. Um, I try to, you know, when he has ideas, [I] try to walk through that with him and, and of course critique if needed, but, but really just help him to become a good researcher and scholar. And so, I would say that that's the other aspect that I think is crucial for me in terms of my relationship with him and with some other students – just really just developing, um, the scholarly side of their experiences and their research activities, um, in that process.

Alex sees guiding his protégés through the “scholarly side of their experiences and their research activities” as key part of his role in mentoring them. Interestingly, Alex points out that research skills are often taught outside of the classroom. While research is often included in the job responsibilities of academics, it is not always a requirement for graduate students within graduate programs where they are training to become future academics. Thus, mentors can be instrumental in the development of a robust research program for graduate students in doctoral programs. Graduate students learn segments of research in coursework through topic-focused seminars and research method seminars, but the tacit knowledge of seeing and executing a project from start to finish often occurs beyond the scope of specific seminars.

Through this professional socialization, graduate students are given both explicit and implicit messages about what it means to be a “good academic.” For example, when discussing her own experience in graduate school, Adelric remembered feeling judged by her peers and the faculty in the program because she worked full-time throughout the program:

> I worked full-time while I did it. I refused to get myself into debt. When I got through the PhD program, which took me seven years instead of the average five because I was going slower, I had no debt and my colleagues had lots of debt. And, I knew I was going to put my kids through college, which we’ve done, and I just couldn’t see having my own debt plus their debt, no way. I was ostracized and criticized for doing that in the PhD program… Some of my student colleagues were absolutely obnoxious to me, just obnoxious. Some of them who were obnoxious, I finished before them even though they were all ... I don’t know how to describe it. They were supposed to be much more skilled and committed. I don’t know what that is. But, all I can say is that was pretty funny and I

> think that's probably why I have a compassion for people who are doing it that way, or at least some understanding of that.

The prototypical graduate student devotes themselves entirely to the program and research – no matter the cost to mental and physical health or financial wellbeing. Deviations from the prototype, as Adelric experienced, is often met with hostility or ostracization from those within the academy. By indicating that she was ostracized and criticized for working full-time, Adelric's experience shows that the socialization into the profession includes explicit messages about what an "academic" does and does not do. In this case, the implicit message was conveyed that, *an academic does not engage in work outside of the academy.* Adelric points out the baseless assumption that students without competing priorities were "supposed to be much more skilled and committed" yet, there were full-time students who still struggled to finish the program before Adelric, who was working full-time throughout the program. Despite the stigma she faced in her graduate program for working full-time, Adelric was able to successfully build a career in her field and ultimately be promoted to full professor.

Related to assumptions about commitment, graduate student participants feel pressured to over perform in order to be considered successful academics. David Gilmour, a graduate student, commented, "It's very hard in graduate school, right? We're just constantly trained right? Do as much as you can, overachieve, et cetera." Not only is the training happening within the classroom, but as mentioned previously, the training extends beyond the classroom. Thus, an implicit message is communicated: if you want to be a successful academic, you have to do more than what is required of you to earn the degree. Similarly, graduate student, Huey Newton, talked about the way graduate students are trained to identify themselves:

> I believe that, in academia, a lot of us have egos. And I feel like when you get... You're kind of trained to get in this way of saying, "I'm the best at this. I am a renowned scholar in this. Or I am the top or I'm a lead in some type of way." And sometimes that transfers to the advisee-mentor, advisee-advisor relationship to the extent of they sometimes come across as professors or full professors or whatever are untouchable. You can't say certain things or do something or go against the grain or call someone out, when we should be in a field where we're constantly sharpening each other.

Huey Newton points out that being a successful academic is more than meeting expectations. It goes beyond being simply good enough to get the job done. Academics, as he points out, "have egos" which is communicated by how they are trained to talk about their expertise. As this participant states, graduate students are trained to communicate their academic identity by claiming, "I'm the best at this. I'm a renowned scholar in this. Or I am the top or I'm a lead in some type of way." Again, it's not enough to simply claim to be an academic or researcher, graduate students are being trained to convey high levels of expertise, which is expected to be a part of the academy.

Moreover, through that process, Huey Newton perceives that there should be a competition or challenge among scholars that results in a constant "sharpening" of one another in order to maintain being "the best." In order to maintain the high levels of expertise expected of an academic, Huey Newton believes academics must challenge the status of others to ensure that standards of the field of intellectual production remain high. Bourdieu (1987) argues that in a particular field of production (e.g., academia) one maintains legitimacy by accumulating various forms of capital. Specifically, symbolic capital "refers to the degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honor and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge and recognition" (p.

7). Academics claim prestige through their expertise in the field, number of publications, invited presentations, number of protégés who become successful academics, and innovations in the field all culminate in symbolic capital. In order to maintain legitimacy of that prestige, the process of sharpening one another is the dialectical process of proving your knowledge and at the same time renegotiating what it means to be "recognized" in the field. The more symbolic capital a person obtains, the more "untouchable" they become. Thus, rather than engaging in that idea of fair competition and "sharpening" one another that Huey desires, it results in stifled communication because of the status of the mentor's symbolic capital.

Graduate students are being socialized into a profession where one is constantly on the defense. For doctoral students, comprehensive exams represent a process where one defends their place to continue in the program to earn a PhD. From there, dissertation defenses prove that doctoral students have successfully executed original research independently in order to have a doctoral degree conferred. As faculty members, the defensive stance of academics continues through the processes of peer-review for publication, third year reviews, and tenure and promotion. This defensive stance within academia often constructs a lack of confidence in graduate students, commonly referred to as the imposter syndrome. The stress of defense meetings, watching peers complete publications, and the amount of time their mentors spend working on research sends implicit messages to graduate students about what it means to be a successful academic. Arya, a graduate student in social science, mentioned that after seeing how hard her advisor works, it made her question her own productivity and quality of work:

> This man does not know how to slow down, he worked every day, even during the pandemic, and he comes to office on Saturdays. So, there is one day that he takes off, which is Sunday, but I still think he works on Sunday, at least part of it, from home. We

> started in the program the same time, and just the way that he has been working, working, working, …achieving all of this publication, just makes me feel like, okay, I need to do better. I need to meet the expectation and so on. And it also feels like, to me, it becomes difficult to catch up with... how should I say it? Catch up with all the developments that he is doing to himself as an academic. So, I constantly feel like, I'm going to let him down. He has been very kind and he has never really expressed that, that I'm letting him down. And I think he realizes it very well, that I'm very insecure and because in many of our conversations, in many, many, many conversations, both in-person and on the phone, I have said like oh, I don't think I'm doing this very well. How can I improve it? Or, do you really like it? I even asked him, when I wrote my comps exam, I emailed him and asked him, do you think it's okay? Did you actually read all of my answers? What do you think? It's almost to the point that I was not trusting him enough. And I was feeling like, he's just a nice person. And he's going to say nice things, but maybe I'm not doing the best work.

Arya's self-doubt is connected to the overworking behaviors she is observing in her mentor. She mentions specifically that she feels like it's difficult to "catch up" with all the "developments he's doing to himself as an academic." Since he does not take time off, which has resulted in a successful publication record, she feels pressured to do the same. So, for Arya, becoming an academic means more than a successful publication record, it means continual self-improvement and professional development resulting in Arya feeling a lot of pressure to also overperform. Interestingly, the pressure to perform at this level is not being explicitly communicated to her – Arya even acknowledges that her mentor has never said she's letting him down. And yet, through observation of his own behaviors, she has created her own set of high standards and

expectations that as a graduate student, she should be able to perform at the same level as a junior faculty member at a research institution. Yet, she has constructed that very expectation of herself. Her observations construct an ideal academic identity that she has already measured herself against during her socialization process.

Knowing how to progress a study from proposal to publication takes more than the standard 16 weeks allocated to one semester. So, while there's knowledge that simply cannot be taught in the constraints of an academic term, the structure of mentoring reinforces the idea that academia means one must go beyond the stated requirements to be successful. Bourdieu (1987) explains that various levels of status are constantly negotiated by agents in fields of production which is organized by hierarchy. Within the field of intellectual production, a tenured full professor would be considered an intellectual elite that is, according to one participant Huey Newton "untouchable," while graduate students would be at the lower end of the hierarchy. These status positions maintain the hierarchical structure in the field. Bourdieu explains, "Each position is subjectively defined by the system of distinctive properties by which it can be situated relative to other positions" (p. 30). Each position within a field relies on the existence of the other positions to create a hierarchy and struggle for power and legitimacy.

Bourdieu describes this struggle as a dialectic tension between the heteronomous principle and the autonomous principle. The heteronomous principle is "favorable to those who dominate the field economically and politically" (p. 40). Well known scholars in their respective fields would benefit most from a dominant position. They are the ones that likely have the publication record to achieve tenure, which is rewarded economically (i.e. job security and pay raises) and politically (i.e. power and authority). Further, failure to achieve tenure results is economic punishment (e.g. loss of work) and non-tenure track work often leads to financial

precarity. Hence, the desire to meet tenure requirements and tenure's corresponding benefits are so great that lower status individuals will go to great lengths to make it happen. On the other hand, the autonomous principle refers to "those of its advocates who are least endowed with specific capital tend to identify with a degree of independence from the economy, seeing temporal failure as a sign of election and success as a sign of compromise" (p. 40). This group would be those who feel a higher calling for their position in academia. The importance of their research remains regardless of whether or where it is published. Their work has inherent value that is not necessarily dependent upon the trends of the field at the time. This mindset is not typically rewarded within the field of intellectual production, and thus a challenging position to maintain. In the next section, I will explore the intersections of social identity, academic identity and mentoring, which will further illuminate the ways in which individuals vie for status and legitimacy within the field of intellectual production.

Social Identity, Academic Identity, & Mentoring

The phrase *research is me-search* is a common aphorism used to describe the reasons why academics engage in the research they do. Research is often driven by a desire to better understand one's own lived experiences. Throughout the interviews conducted on mentoring, social identity was often deeply tied to the research being conducted by the participants, and by extension their academic identity. Emily, a Native American graduate student in social science found that her academic career was born directly out of her connection to her racial/ethnic social identity:

> What I'm doing matters. My work is relevant even if I don't want to do it. The work I'm doing is not about me. I work with Native Americans and climate change. I critique Western science. and because of the history of science research, education and Native

> Americans, or indigenous peoples in general, the work I do is bigger than me. It's not about me… But it's important to communities, my family, myself. And the work I do is, like I said it's about relevance. It's not like I'm just researching for the sake of researching. I'm researching because it's important. And it benefits Indians and it benefits the Earth.

Emily feels a higher calling for doing the research she's doing. Emily's research is about the future of her community. When Emily says, "It's not like I'm just researching for the sake of researching. I'm researching because it's important," she's offering an implicit critique of the traditionally Western, postpositivist approach to research that is interested in discovering *Truth* without deep regard to the lived experiences of the subjects of the research. Emily repeatedly communicates the various ways in which she sees her research as being important beyond just herself.

Throughout her interview, Emily revealed how both her master's mentor and now her PhD mentor had both taken advantage of her position as a Native American woman with connections to various tribes to conduct research. Upon completing data collection with over 20 different tribal councils, her Master's thesis advisor told Emily she should give up on the degree while simultaneously attempting to steal the data that was collected for Emily's thesis. After that traumatic experience, Emily was ready to give up on academia, but a professor at a nearby school was impressed with her work and thought she would be a great PhD student in their program. Additionally, her future PhD mentor claimed two tribal identities, so Emily felt like he would be a mentor she could trust based on their shared identity as Native American. After being in the program and working with her PhD mentor for a few years, Emily later found out that her PhD advisor was falsely claiming Native American identities with no proof of a connection to

the tribes with which he claimed membership. When Emily confronted him about this, he became hostile and made it clear she was not to talk about that topic with him again. The mentor even went as far as threatening her position in the program to complete her degree. During our interview, when I asked Emily why she is still in the program given the extreme adversity she was facing, Emily came back to her reason for doing this research in the first place:

> Native women are still not given the same opportunity and agency as the men. There's a lot fewer women *pretendians* [someone falsely claiming a native identity; emphasis added] than men, which is interesting in itself. But being able to see the type of scholar I want to be in my mentors, and I want to make sure that I can give every opportunity to the Native students I teach in the future as possible, and make sure that they believe in themselves, that they know they have value because I am an accidental academic. I never planned on going to college. I only went to college because I wanted to get a better job. Here it is 10 years later, and I'm wrapping up a PhD, which was never on my radar, never in my life would have thought I would be getting a PhD… And that's why I do it because if I quit, then [my PhD mentor] was right. If I failed, then that's not just my failure, it's his failure. But the biggest failure is mine because he's already got his agency. He just got professorship now. So, there's nothing I can do to unseat his power structure and his gatekeeping, because that's what he is. He is a gatekeeper. If cannot finish my degree, then he wins. And another Native woman is not going to have the agency to protect and fight for her community. It's the bottom line. It's not about me. The work is relevant. It's not like I'm promoting myself. It's just the work I do matters. And I'm stubborn, I guess. I don't want to be a failure. I only fail when I quit trying.

Emily describes her academic identity as an "accidental academic" because she never set out to become an academic in the first place. While she was faced with valid reasons to leave two different programs, it was her connection to Indigenous communities that are impacted by her work that kept her going. She sees the impact she can have for future aspiring Native women scholars and on the communities that are involved in her research. Additionally, she mentions that there are mentors modeling the kind of scholar she wants to be. So, despite the failure of her primary mentors in her masters and doctoral programs, she was able to branch out to find those who do truly share her ethnic social identity, are participating in similar types of work, and can demonstrate that Emily, too, can be a successful Native scholar. Emily had to seek out mentorship beyond her primary advisors to create a network of mentoring that would give her the support she needed that the White advisors simply could not.

Emily's experience shows the importance of mentoring relationships for retention of graduate students of color academia. Sadly, Emily's advisors who were White, enacted trauma and made it even more challenging for her to want to be an academic. However, this failure is not always the case. Advisors that are willing to be allies to their graduate students can be the difference between dropping out and graduation. Huey Newton, a graduate student, noted that if it were not for the continuous support of his advisor, he would not have stayed in the program:

> There were plenty of times where I was like, "I don't belong here. I'm not the mold." And even when a lot of the time graduate students are African-American or Black or ethnic minorities, there's still this mold of a specific mold you're supposed to fit when you're in that role. You're usually a well-off Black person who comes from a decent side and all this other stuff. And can't really relate to... You know what I mean? I didn't get that at all. And so, if not having someone who was like, "It's okay that you don't fit that

> mold; be yourself in this space. And you're a different Black than your colleague over here who was also Black. And I respect that. Y'all are both Black, but y'all aren't the same individual with the same likes, with the same views." And if I didn't have someone…I would've left because I don't really know too many people that came from the same background as me or view the world similar to me that are Black within this space. You know what I mean? So, if not for her [my mentor] and I's relationship, I probably wouldn't be here right now.

Huey Newton expresses the feeling that many graduate participants felt – that they don't belong. For Huey Newton, this feeling of not belonging is coupled with his racial social identity. He was not a "well-off Black person who comes from a decent side" of town. So, not only was he not the prototypical student because he was Black, he also was from a different social class background as well. So, the appraisal support, his advisor gives him, that it's ok he's not the same as more affluent Black students in the program, gives him the encouragement he needs to stay in the program.

Higher education institutions were created as exclusionary institutions for the privileged class of wealthy White men (Allen, 2011). As society changed to recognize the humanity in individuals beyond that demographic group, higher education became more accessible. However, the history of a space that was not created for underrepresented identities still impacts the lived experiences of how academics entering that space negotiate their social identities (e.g. race, gender, class, sexuality, age, dis/ability) in relation to their academic identity. The academy was not created for those that do not fit into the affluent, heterosexual, White, cis-gender, able-bodied, male prototype, which creates unique challenges for those who diverge from those

identities. Carmen, faculty member in social science, tackles in her interview as she describes her BIPOC women mentoring group,

> I always start off with the same thing, because it's an important reminder that here's the groundwork. All of you are smart enough to be here. You have already been accepted in this program. You do not have to prove that you were smart enough to belong here. It is not your intellect that was forcing you to leave. It is the challenges and the barriers and the obstacles along the way that push you out. You are attending and going to school in a place where women were never intended to come. When these institutions were made. And the programs were designed where people of color were not intended to come or belong, or be here. Already have that challenge coming and trying to shoehorn ourselves into an institution and programs that were not designed for us. And so, if we can start identifying and figuring out strategies for those obstacles, for those challenges and how do we, how do we work through that? How do we get around them? Then they won't be able to finish, but it's not because you don't deserve to be there. It's not because you're not smart enough to be here. You've already done that hurdle. It's everything else that pushes people out of graduate school. And it's, you know, in women and women of color are pushed out in the greatest proportion.

Carmen directly calls attention to the challenges that her students who are racial minority women will face due do their social identities. She validates the fact that because students have been accepted into the program, the students have already met the requirements to be there. However, it is the challenge of being in an institution and discipline that was never created for people like them where the struggles to continue will occur. Because Carmen sees that women and women of color are pushed out of the academy in the "greatest proportion," she is actively creating a

structure to give the women the support to stay through her group mentoring. Fostering a sense of community and shared solidarity around marginalized social identities fosters a space for her graduate students to explore and create their own academic identities while simultaneously, having the support they need that is unique to their social identities in the process. Carmen starts by giving all of her students the appraisal support to let them know they belong in the academy and continuously communicates that to the students as she works with them.

Contradictions & Challenges of Cultivating Academic Identity: Dropping Your Shield

The type of person who decides to go to graduate school is often one who was told they were good at school from a young age and formed their identity around academics. At least, this was what Adam, professor of social science, shared when he gave his metaphor of "*The Shield*" [emphasis added]. Over the years, he developed this extended metaphor to describe the cognitive dissonance graduate students often experience as they enter graduate programs. Adam observed that many of his students shaped their identity around being the smartest and best in their grade, class, and university. This intellectual identity ultimately becomes a psychological shield behind which students found protection. The validation of intellectual identity leads such individuals to apply to and enter graduate school. This is the first moment the shield no longer protects them in the ways it used to:

> When you go to graduate school, maybe the first time that shield doesn't work anymore. You're not smart enough. Your work isn't hard enough. You can't keep up. Your faculty go, "This isn't good enough." The first time in your whole life that anybody has told you, you're not the, this image of yourself [you previously envisioned]. … A lot of faculty or people who become faculty end up going back to the metalworks and making that shield stronger and beating themselves into submission until their whole life comes about work.

> Their whole life becomes about becoming so powerfully strong in one part of their lives that they won't ever be hurt, but the thing is … other students crumble. And I think they can crumble hard when confronted with every, that the shield that they've been building since grade school cannot be the thing that they define themselves at because their job, their life situation won't allow it. Their mental illness won't allow it. Their obligations to family members who are dying or sick or their partner won't allow it. When I say won't allow it, I mean it's like, I can't work constantly. I can't give up everything for school. Like I gotta live. And I think what happens is, is when that shield crumbles for many students, that is not a face-threatening action on a small scale, that is a fundamental re-shifting of what you think about yourself. And that is almost certainly gonna come from your faculty. And the other source is gonna be your peers who also seem to be super smart and capable.

Becoming an academic does not begin in graduate school. As Adam points out, it often begins long before that as people are socialized into the vocation of becoming an academic at a younger age (Kramer, 2010). Adam also points out the core struggle of becoming highly identified with your profession: your entire life is consumed by performing in that occupation. For academia in particular, this means total devotion of your life to overworking and outperforming those around you. When the hard work that you are told will be enough does not turn out to be enough – it is not simply face-threatening. It is a deeply personal paradigm shift in reconfiguring one's own personal and professional identity.

Uncertainty about the strength of your "shield," as Adam puts it, does not end when a graduate student is hired as a tenure-track assistant professor at an R1 institution – it continues throughout the lifespan of one's academic career. Cammy, professor in social science, described

how one of her recent graduated student protégés was "killing it" at her new job, but when Cammy checked in with the student she found out the newly hired faculty member was not doing as well as Cammy previously thought:

> She said that she's really struggling, because at [that university] they do a review every three months. I was like, 'That's insane. You can't get anything done in three months in academia. Why would they do that to you?' I think it's meant to be a positive mentoring check in with the senior faculty for pre-tenure folks. She's experiencing it as this critique of not having published anything in her first year at a tenure track job. … I was really surprised when she said she was struggling because she hasn't gotten anything published this year. It was a tough conversation for me because I was surprised. I didn't feel prepared. It was also going back to the basics of, last year as we knew she was transitioning into this position, we had a lot of conversations about, 'Okay, you already have these things out. This is what the pipeline looks like. It's okay to slow down in that first year because you're adjusting. You have to find a new dentist and move across the country in a pandemic.' These are all things that just take time. If it's slow for a year, that's fine. 'Here's the plan to ramp it up.' We just had to return to that and also recognize that a check in every three months is not normal. She wouldn't have anything to report back after three months no matter what, pandemic or no. We had already mapped out a full time for the next few years and she had a bunch of milestones that she was hitting. She has stuff that's in the pipeline. Everything is okay.

Cammy's protégé's experience demonstrates just a few of the contradictions of the academic identity. First, the organization's attempt to create structures of support for new members only exacerbated the stress of the first-year faculty member. The check-ins were happening in a time

frame that was not spaced out enough for this new faculty member to have progress to report. Thus, when she was preparing for those meetings, it made her feel like she was not performing in the ways she was expected to. Second, this experience demonstrates the pressure to produce concrete deliverables to the organization to prove the worth of the employee. Merely having a pipeline of research that was moving towards publication was not enough of a marker for success in the mind of this new faculty member. Rather, due to the quarterly check-ins, she was feeling pressured to have something concrete to deliver to her department.

Similarly, Carmen, a social science professor, pointed out that graduate school is not only intellectually challenging, but also poses extreme challenges to maintaining mental health:

> I noticed that many of my peers in graduate school did very poorly, health wise, mental health wise, wellbeing, … if you come into graduate school with any kind of mental health challenges, graduate school tends to make them much worse…. Graduate school tends to create insecurities and questionable wellbeing at times for people. And what really troubled me in the experience of being a graduate student was that I remember at the end of the program, you put all this time into graduate school… Anybody who's been in graduate school, it's a very intense experience, such as a lot of pressures. It's really challenging to even talk to people who aren't in that environment about it. It becomes stressful and strange talking to friends and family because many of them maybe they've had an undergraduate experience, and they think that graduate school is similar to that. And it's really hard to convey why it's not, and there's intense pressure and this overwhelming amount of work that you have to get done. And so, they're already starting to get disconnect for that support system that you would just normally have.

The very nature of graduate school creates situations in which graduate students' mental health is at risk. During the pandemic, the number of graduate students with anxiety and depression increased from 26% to 39% of students screening positive with anxiety and from 15% to 32% screening positive for depression (Woolston, 2020). So, as graduate students are at a higher risk for depression and anxiety, Carmen rightfully points out that those with existing mental health diagnoses are likely to experience worse symptoms as they complete their programs. To make matters worse, the support system you would normally have – family and friends – may not be able to understand the struggles you are experiencing unless they had also been in a doctoral program. Thus, graduate students are creating self-imposed discursive closure (Deetz, 1992) by avoiding conversations about the stress of graduate school with those that would not be able to provide the appropriate social support.

For some faculty members, mentors in graduate school had a positive impact on how they developed into academics. However, many others had experiences such that when thinking about how to mentor their own students, faculty members wanted to do better. Carmen reflected,

> When I finished my program and I, among friends, peers, I was really troubled by the fact that why at the end of graduate school, when you were done, when you have finished your PhD, why do I feel like I know less than I did when I started? Why do I feel, pejoratively, why do I feel dumber than I did when I started a PhD program? And to me, I always... That's fundamentally incorrect. There are better ways, it's, there are better ways to train people, breaking down some... We [are] not the military. We aren't, we don't need to break someone down to mold them into what it is that we need to be. And I found it really problematic and really troubling that there are better ways to train people. And if we can't find better ways to train students, than this model that I went to grad school

> under that I see now as a professional, many of my colleagues continue to implement and enforce that exact same system. It's extraordinarily problematic. It's a lack of education, obviously people have their PhDs, but a lack of education on mentoring, on support, on human decency, on treating a person as a whole person, a lack of creativity and imagination. And that's one of the things that led me to just start carving out my own path before there was a pathway of being in [Women & Gender Studies]. And working on these more formalized and informal structures, likewise, in Public Affairs and Administration.

Finding "a better way" to train people was important to not only Carmen, but also many other faculty members as well. The ideas of "human decency" and "treating a person as a whole person" as central to graduate student mentoring was shared by many of the participants in this study. This section will explore the ways in which faculty members engaged in whole person mentoring as a way of resisting the traditional ways of 'break[ing] someone down" to train graduate students.

Summary

Graduate school is where graduate students are professionally socialized into becoming academics. Through the close, one-on-one conversations they have with their mentors, graduate students solidify what it means to be an academic through both explicit and implicit messages. Social identity shapes the academic identity of many mentors and protégés alike – informing not only their program of research but also their approaches to mentoring as well. Finally, becoming an academic is often rife with contradictions. The high-levels of performance required to be considered a successful academic are challenging to maintain and leads to struggles in mental and physical health with not much structural or social support to handle the struggles. Adam, a

professor, sums up the experience by saying, "academia is not a particularly healthy organization and yet I am so happy to be part of it. And I feel grateful for the job and I don't know what to make of that, but that's just both of those things are true to me." Those that are in the academy are often socialized into the expectation of a lifelong profession. Yet, they are not blind to the systematic short-comings, inequities and challenges of academia as a whole. Many academics work to understand and address these challenges through their mentoring as a form of praxis. Mentoring as praxis, addresses the way people enact mentoring as an extension of their academic identities.

Mentoring as Praxis

"To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin" (hooks, 1994, p. 14)

While not specifically referencing the mentoring relationship, hook's words encapsulate the way in which many faculty member participants approach mentoring. The training and mentoring of future academics are unique relationships created between faculty members and graduate students, which requires commitment from both parties. In the following section, I discuss the ways in which faculty members' ideological and epistemological commitments informing their research were enacted through the praxis of mentoring. This theme highlights the ways in which faculty members' research and disciplinary identities influenced how they approached mentoring. Following that discussion, I will look at the spectrum of mentoring involvement ranging from whole-person mentoring to hands-off mentoring approaches.

Research Informed Mentoring

Academic identity often goes beyond a research agenda. For many faculty members, how they approached research and what they researched often informed how they interacted with their graduate student protégés. For example, Carmen focuses her research on the conversations people have around reproductive rights and abortion. Through her research, she is often faced with awkward and challenging conversations with her research participants. So, when it came to coaching her graduate student protégé about how the protégé would dress differently from her usual appearance for fieldwork, Carmen felt more adequately prepared to have that challenging conversation in a way that let the student know they needed to change how they dressed, but still sensitive to the student's expression of their own identity. Thinking about the awkwardness of the conversation, Carmen reflected,

> That's pretty much what I study. Those conversations, I've just always been used to those. But then you layer into that being a feminist through and through, a feminist human being, we have awkward conversations. We live in the awkward. We have to talk about power. We talk about class, we talk about race, we talk about intersectionality. In that regard, I'm probably a little bit more comfortable.

Because her research focused on the "awkward conversations," Carmen was prepared to address challenging and uncomfortable topics with her graduate students. While other professors may have shied away from being direct about the dress and appearance of a student when it comes to fieldwork, Carmen knew it needed to be talked about in order for the student to be successful in the research process. When Carmen states "we live in the awkward" it speaks not only to the research she engages, but also how she perceives her position as a professor and mentor. This willingness to engage with the awkward aligns with hook's (1994) engaged pedagogy which requires a focus on the wellbeing of not only the student, but also the teacher. Carmen is more

than simply a feminist scholar, as Carmen put it in her interview, she is a “feminist through and through.” So, that part of her identity is not left at the door while she mentors students; instead, her feminist identity informs her mentoring practice.

When working with graduate student protégés, faculty mentors often face decisions between offering the quick answer and the one that aligns with their academic identity. After their department worked with the teaching center on campus to create more continuity across the undergraduate curriculum, Hank Asher, professor in humanities, was approached by a graduate teaching assistant who wanted to “overhaul” the class the student was assigned to teach in the following semester. Hank Asher explains the various potential responses they could give to the student:

> It would be one thing for me to be like, ‘Look, I’m an expert. I’ve been teaching this for 20 years. You’ve been teaching it for six months. I get to win.’ That would be a bad conversation, right? But instead like, ‘These are valuable contributions. I’m interested in learning why you made these choices? This isn’t appropriate for this course at this time, let’s slate it in for a big review with the full committee that includes a graduate student. You’re welcome to join six months down the road.’… The feminist way is almost always harder. It makes for a better end but it’s much more work.

Hank Asher’s response to the student could have easily taken the position of domination by shutting down the student’s desire for change. However, instead, Hank Asher chose to engage in “the feminist way” of affirming the contributions of the student, asking for further insight into the student’s desire to change the course, and then inviting them to participate in the future. Engaged pedagogy “necessarily values student expression” (hooks, 1994, p. 20). So, by encouraging the student to be involved in the planning process in the first place, and then asking

for further input from the student, Hank Asher, is engaging in a dialogic level of mentoring by involving the graduate student in the decision-making process. Again, this approach to mentoring is facilitated by identifying as a feminist epistemologically and axiologically.

Philosophical commitments to one's discipline and scholarship inform the practice of mentoring. When describing the attitudes towards mentoring in his field in general, Henry, a professor in natural sciences, observed:

> At least in my field, people say that physicists are like cats.... Each one of us does things very differently. I think that's true in general about people, but it's, I think even more true... perhaps it's more true about physicists that really explore things that nobody has ever explored before. That's the whole purpose of what we're doing. And it's very, very important for us to be our own people. And that's true about faculty as well, how they, how they mentor their students, varies a great deal among us. And that's the way it should be. And I do not, I do not think that it's a good idea to interfere with their academic freedom...

Henry points out the very nature of the type of research physicists do – "exploring things that nobody has ever explored before" – creates a unique academic identity for those in the field of physics in particular. Negative face needs, desires to be autonomous, are specifically important for this group of academics in order to explore and have the autonomy to engage in work and research that is novel and unimagined. Thus, not only do the mentors in this field need the autonomy when it comes to their program of research, but also when it comes to how they choose to engage in the practice of mentoring. While many differences may exist, ultimately Henry sees similarities because the ultimate goal of training and mentoring future physicists is the same.

The benefits of mentoring as praxis were evident for graduate student, Emily, as she was able to find scholars from various disciplines that shared her social identity. When reflecting on what it felt like to network with other Native scholars, she explained:

> I get to work with Native people, Native scholars, Native scientists from different disciplines, from different parts of the world, from different eco regions, from Alaska to Hawaii, to Puerto Rico, to Mexico and the Central Americans. ...There's so much work to be done in our communities that when we find each other, it becomes just this overwhelming urge of mutual support and empowerment. We want to see each other succeed, which is often contrary to being in this academic system with non-Native people who are competitive, who are individualist. When we're with each other as natives, there's this family, this unity, this mutual support, this just joy. Joy of knowing that there are others like you, that you're not alone. That your work matters and they appreciate your work. ... And when we help each other, like when I reach out and help the younger mentees that I get a chance to work with and stuff through different programs and spaces and the appreciation and the thriving that happens when these young people see mentors like them who understand their situation, who understand their experiences, who understand how lost you get in the system sometimes and how little the help and nurturing relationships happen... I want us to all rise together. I don't need to stand on somebody else to leverage my own self. And that's often contrary to the system that we're a part of, right?

As a member of her tribal community, Emily finds that her tribal identity informs how she sees herself as an academic, and then called to mentor those younger than her. She resists the traditional Western notions of competition and individualism she sees in academia by fostering a

sense of family and mutual support with other Native people. Ultimately, because she can fully express herself in these spaces, she finds joy – which hooks (1994) might consider as seeking self-actualization. A key component of engaged pedagogy's focus on wellbeing. It is not just the wellbeing of the student or protégé. Rather, to be able to fully engage the whole person of the protégé, the mentor must also find wellness through self-actualization. The next section will directly address the idea of whole person mentoring as discussed by participants.

Whole Person Mentoring

Whole person mentoring views the mentoring relationship as more than merely teaching protégé how to be an academic; it means approaching the students as whole people that were deserving of time, care, and attention beyond simple production of research/teaching. Further, mentoring from this perspective was more than advising graduate students on the steps required to complete their degrees. Whole person mentoring was meaningful for the students because they felt like they can totally show up and have the support they need. Often, whole person mentoring was practiced by mentors who identified as female and/or feminist, or those that primarily mentored underrepresented students. When faculty mentors were willing to engage the "whole person" of their protégés, it was a fundamentally different approach to mentoring because it went beyond the scope of traditional academic training. For humanities professor, Sean, seeing students as whole people began with his early education at Jesuit institutions:

> So, I went to Catholic schools and I went to a Jesuit institution for my undergrad. And there's a, there's a philosophy of educating the whole person. Like that's like a very, that's a very big thing, educating the whole person. And that's something that I've carried with me. … I really try to honor the humanity of my students and to see them as whole people who need to be known as whole people and valued as whole people and carry it

> for us. … if you're somebody who works primarily with students of color, um, it was sort of unavoidable the way that people just sort of felt besieged. You know, a lot of my students felt really besieged by, um, by policies, by rhetoric, by a lot of the stuff that was going on, you know, without, without wanting to make, um, assumptions about people's political leanings. There was a real sense of, um, … needing to protect them, like these things are protecting themselves. Um, and just being like worn out, too. … I mean students have just been feeling really like beset with all this stuff. And so even more than before I think, um, yeah, I, you know, I've had to, to, to try to just be extra conscious of what students are going through and where they are emotionally.

Sean's experience with whole person mentoring began in his own educational experiences prior to becoming a mentor of graduate students. The idea of whole person education was instilled in him as an undergraduate student. While he is not currently teaching for a Jesuit institution (Sean teaches at a public research university), the philosophy of whole person mentoring is still informing the way he approaches his relationships with his graduate students. For his field of study in particular, he works with a high number of students of color and from immigrant families. Thus, for these students, he mentions that he needs to be "extra conscious" of what they are going through in their lives beyond the graduate program. Through whole person mentoring, even though he may not be experiencing the same social and personal struggles his students are, he can still be available to support them through those trials beyond academics. Sean is clearly concerned about the emotional wellbeing of his students when he described the experiences they have had throughout the past few years and feels a need to "protect" them. He goes on to explain the importance of recognizing the emotions of his protégés when he shared the following story:

> [T]here's a story about, I forget where it comes from. There's a story about the Buddha where he was supposed to give a talk, um, to some people or like preach, preach a sermon to people. And he told his followers like… everybody needs to be fed first. Like nobody can listen, nobody can listen to this stuff if they're hungry, like they need to, sort of like the loaves and the fishes, you know? So, I think that's how I, I, you know, I try to be aware of my student's hierarchy of needs and like what, what sort of, um, emotional, or even like material needs, um, need to be addressed before we can talk about academic stuff. And then I think what I've found is that if students do feel, um, cared for as whole people, then they, um, in a way it helps to center them a little bit and ground them and feel like, okay, like, yeah, this isn't, it's not like, you know, [Sean] is pressuring me and trying to squeeze something out of me at a time when I'm already, um, I'm already in rough shape. It's like, he's trying to understand what I'm going through, but he also believes, believes that I'm going to be able to do what I'm trying to do academically. At least I hope that's what if that's what comes across.

Sean continues to connect his philosophical and spiritual commitments to his approach to mentoring through this story of Buddha and loaves and fishes. Connecting these two stories, his takeaway is that before the crowds could be fed spiritually, they had to be fed physically. Similarly, Sean recognizes that his own students need to have their own physical and emotional needs met before he can engage them academically. Moreover, Sean recognizes that through caring about the emotional and material needs of his students, they trust him more to help them become successful in their academic pursuits.

Cammy, a self-identified Latino professor in social science, did not have mentors of color within her program when she was studying as a graduate student. So, she had to learn how to

create a network of mentors that could provide her the support she needed as a student of color that her department could not provide for her. Later, when it came time to be a mentor herself, she carefully considered the type of mentoring she would give to her students, which led to a practice of whole person mentoring. When I asked her what whole person mentoring meant to her, Cammy responded:

> I think that the whole person mentoring, to me, really means that mentoring about the career and the career field cannot be disconnected from aspects of identity and personal life. When we think about whole person mentoring, I think about how something as basic as deciding on sub field or questions for the dissertation, that's often shaped by identity in the field that I'm working in. How that research will be received by the field I think is always shaped by issues of identity. Helping students to understand that what strategies they need and how we think about self-care in the process. For example, I have a PhD student right now who is a badass Black woman who is working on issues with policing in Black communities. She's doing interviews as part of her data collection for her dissertation. We were just talking, it was yesterday, or it was Friday. We were just talking on Friday about how does she think about self-care in that process. Those interviews are going to be really emotionally trying in a way that doing interviews when you don't have shared identities with people who are regularly being killed by the police probably wouldn't have the same kind of emotional toll. Really thinking about, how does she consider self-care as part of the dissertation process.

So, similar to Sean, Cammy believes protégé's identity outside of the classroom or research project cannot be divorced from the academic work itself. Moreover, Cammy argues that the way that the research itself is received by others in the field is also directly influenced by the social

identity of the researcher presenting it. The identity of the protégé is at the core of the questions Cammy asks as she coaches her students through the research process. As Cammy describes coaching her protégé through the research process, she centers self-care as a part of that process. Importantly, Cammy does not describe prescribing what that self-care should look like for her protégé, but rather, she asks her student what self-care would look like for that particular student during this particular research project. Allowing the graduate student to explore those needs individually, rather than prescribing them, is an important way to honor the negative face, or autonomy, of the graduate student.

Navigating how to honor the whole person of an individual is often a balancing act of recognizing the positive and negative face needs of the protégé, while providing reasonable support for the student to be successful. Humanities professor, Jill, observed that while not all her colleagues want to "hear the personal" sides of their protégés, for her, it's an important aspect of helping students be successful because there are often aspects of a person's life not directly tied to their work that can influence their capacity to be successful in the work they want to engage. Rather than segregating the personal from the professional, she sees the integration of both as an important way to remove potential obstacles and have the appropriate support needed to face those struggles. One specific example she provided was when Jill was working with a student preparing for her comprehensive exams. The protégé had been "on schedule for a while" but then the student revealed she was feeling behind because the student was struggling with focusing on the reading. Because Jill has heard similar feelings from students preparing for their exams, she shared:

> I was prepared at that moment to say, 'Everyone feels unprepared when they come into exams because they've never done it before so it's really anxiety provoking. But I hear

> you, and I know that people have been struggling with a lot of different things.' So, I said, 'When you say that you're unprepared, do you have 50% of the reading done? Do you have 80% of the reading done but you're just feeling uncomfortable about talking about it?' I said, 'Because some of that will come with adrenaline when you're in the testing situation.' And I said, 'Or do you have less than 50% of the reading done? Because if that's the case, then you will not pass. And we don't want to put you into a situation where you're going to fail.' And she said yeah. She said, 'I think I only have about 30% of the reading done.' And I said, 'Okay. It's not a matter of me giving you all the encouragement in the world.' I was like, 'Let's get you on task for how we can speed up the reading for you but still enable you to retain what you're reading and still keep you on track for graduation. Let's see if we cannot take a full another semester. Let's try to have you read through the summer and take your exams at the beginning of the semester, early September then you can still be thinking about your dissertation proposal and perhaps take that dissertation proposal review at the end of the semester instead of the following semester or at at the beginning of the next semester so you still have the whole semester to start working.' And that sounded good to her. And so, we postponed her exam which I think was ... Yes, it was just talking to her and kind of listening to what the problem was and what the various solutions could be.

Asking specific questions about the progress of her student gave Jill the appropriate insight she needed to help the student move forward in a way that would set the student up for success. The openness Jill approached her student with gave the student the opportunity to be honest with her progress to receive the proper assistance – in this case adjusting her timeline – in a way that would lead to the best outcome for the student. In this moment, the protégé's negative and

positive face are potentially being violated. The negative face of the student's own desire to follow the timeline previously set, and struggling to maintain that autonomy on her own, is being renegotiated by extending a timeline. In turn, the positive face of wanting to be perceived as capable to meet the demands of the program are also being violated by this conversation because in order to receive the help she needs, the student must admit that she is not as far along in the process as she needed to be in order to pass the exams. Throughout the conversation, Jill puts an emphasis on wanting the student to be successful by not wanting to put her in a "situation where you're going to fail." When Jill proposes a solution, she uses plural pronouns of "we" and "let's" demonstrating efforts at communal coping (Afifi et al., 2020) that Jill will be involved in the solution which can decrease the potential threat to positive face by taking on some of that responsibility in the conversation.

Honoring the whole person of a protégé means that the mentor is there for highs and lows of the variety of experiences a person has throughout a doctoral program. Sophia, a professor in social science, found that students have always been open in sharing their emotions with her:

> Students would come into my office and they'd be like, 'I never cry,' and then they'd start crying. I'd be like, 'Okay, what have I done? Am I a terrible person that I make people cry?' [laughs] But a lot of times people would come in, they'd close the door and they'd say, 'Here's the problem I'm facing or here's what's going on.' I don't know if I was just more approachable or if it was because I was willing to just listen, or maybe because I kept my door open all the time, or maybe because they had spent time in class with me and knew that I would give them a pretty honest opinion or maybe because I was female. I have no idea. .... Students have a tendency to disclose all sorts of things to me, and funny things too. I mean, they don't really come in and cry, but they would come in

> with great news and we would celebrate, jump up and down and they would eat chocolate off my desk, or a crazy thing would happen. I had one student who had her purse stolen and it was a whole rigmarole. In the end, the police came to tell her that they didn't find her purse, but they realized she had a parking permit issue, and so they arrested her in front of her kids and she was in the newspaper. Crazy stories, people come in and tell me all of these. So, I don't know. I don't know if it's just because I'm willing to listen and ask questions, or I don't know. But yes, people tend to share both the good and the bad with me. I tend to honor emotions, so I feel like you get to be a whole person.

Sophia provides an important distinction here for those considering the whole person – it goes beyond being open to hearing the negative or hard emotions of frustration, sadness, and anger. While certainly those are important to be recognized and listened to, Sophia points out the importance of celebration and validation of the positive emotions protégés express as well. Celebrating the great news, a protégé wants to share with a mentor, is an important way in which the mentor can honor the positive face needs of the protégé. It recognizes their success and validates the positive aspects of their personhood, potentially reinforcing an academic identity as discussed in the previous section.

Faculty mentors were not the only participants to discuss the importance of recognizing the whole personhood of protégés. For some of the graduate students, having a mentor who engaged in whole person mentoring made all the difference. Audrey, a graduate student in social science, expressed that her advisor made all the difference for her first year in her PhD program:

> When I think about how rough this year could have been, starting a PhD at a new institution in the middle of a pandemic, I feel like it's been such a great year. It hasn't been the year that I envisioned, but it's been great nonetheless. And I feel I've really been

> able to thrive because of my advisor, quite honestly. My advisor wears a lot of hats with me, because I have also been his research assistant this year, he's my advisor, and I've also taken a class with him both semesters. So, because of that, we have a weekly meeting, and we just chat about anything and everything, right, from whether it's a class thing or a research thing, or an advising thing, whatever the case may be.… but I definitely feel like he cares about me as a person. And that means the world. He recognizes that I'm a fellow human being and he doesn't make me feel like an idiot, and I'm not especially intimidated by him, I feel I can ask him stupid questions.

Audrey points out that her first year in her program has not been the year she "envisioned, but it's been great nonetheless" because of the relationship she had with her mentor. His support of her and willingness to engage with her at all levels gives her the security in the relationship she needs in order to ask questions, even "stupid questions." A recognition of someone's humanity allows them to not fear their positive face will be at risk. Trusting that the other person will still honor one's own positive face allows the exploration the protégé needs to engage in appropriate information seeking behaviors (Kramer, 2010) as they learn the various aspects of the new profession they are being socialized into.

The pandemic created unique challenges for Victoria, a non-traditional graduate student in social science who is a single mother of two children. Like many other parents during the pandemic, Victoria was suddenly facing a new reality where there was not a separation of work and homelife. When describing her mentor, Victoria mentioned how her mentor was willing to acknowledge the multiple roles Victoria was juggling:

> She's [Victoria's mentor] a very personal mentor in that... I think she does this with everyone. She'll definitely ask you about your kids, et cetera. Some mentors really are

> careful to never mention personal lives in any way at all ever.… This year it's been inevitable. If I'd had an advisor this year who was like, 'Your personal life is your personal life and it's not part of school,' I think I would've just dropped out this year because this year personal life has trumped everything because I've had to be home with children seven days a week for an entire calendar year. I couldn't go to the office. There's people screaming in the background while I'm on calls. I'm on Zoom meetings with my advisor and there's kids running around half dressed behind me. She did, I feel like, work hard to acknowledge that she knew it must be super hard for me trying to work and work on my dissertation and be teaching kids full time.

Victoria's experience speaks to the importance of whole person mentoring. She claims that if she had a mentor who was not willing to engage in the full challenges of the pandemic changing her homelife, Victoria would have dropped out of the program. Victoria, at that point, had completed her ethnographic data collection for her dissertation. So, for a PhD candidate to get that far in the process and then drop out would have been not only a hard choice for the candidate, but also reflect negatively on the program for not supporting the student to completion at that point. Victoria's experience shows that when a mentor is willing to simply "acknowledge" there are more things happening in a protégé's life beyond the work they are doing together, it can make all the difference in regard to student retention and graduation, as well as their overall wellbeing.

Octavia, an international graduate student in social science, observed that her advisor has created an atmosphere of openness where she can fully be herself:

> I feel like he has created the atmosphere. I can talk to him about it. I can talk to him. There was a day we were talking about ... There was something I'd been part of and he had asked me my reactions to it. And when it was just two of us there, I was like,

> ‘Honestly, this is just how I feel about this. It might not be a popular opinion, but ...’ And he really appreciated my being honest. Yes, I’m an open person normally, but even I can be more open with him. Even if I were going through ... I don’t know that I’ll be going through. … I feel like he’s always going to take my side. I’m going to tell him that, “Oh, this is what has happened.” And he’s open that way. But you wouldn’t know just by looking at him. You won’t be able to see it.

Octavia describes herself as a generally open person, and yet the relationship she has with her advisor enables her to be even more open and honest with him. She was not afraid to share her opinion with him, even if she perceived it to be unpopular. Sharing a dissenting opinion, places oneself in a position where one’s positive face can be called into question by the other party. While Octavia may be otherwise open to sharing her opinions, the relationship she has with her advisor demonstrates that he is someone she trusts to honor her positive face because she can be “even more open with him.” Beyond being open with him, she can trust that whatever she may experience in her journey as a graduate student, he will be there on her side to support her.

While graduation and completion of a degree is the ultimate goal for a graduate program, whole person mentoring recognizes that for some students, that process may look different, and that at times other facets of life and identity matter more than academics. Professor Hank Asher notes,

> I tell all of my students like, “Look, our role as a department and as faculty are to help you grow. So, you can either grow into us or you can grow out of us and that is fine. There’s no problem whether you’re growing into being a scholar or you’re growing out into the world. But as long as you’re growing.” I get really concerned when I see students shrinking, which I feel is inevitable for many in the grad school setting at some point

> because of the stresses and inferiority complex and all these different things. So that's when I check in and I'm like, "Whoa! You, what's happening right here? Let's get you some Miracle Grow to make it happen."

Caring about a protégé as a whole person means that you are concerned with their growth and wellbeing beyond the academy. Hank Asher points out that sometimes mentoring means helping protégés grow into an academic identity and profession, but it can also mean finding a different path beyond the world of higher education and academia. For Hank Asher, and other mentors focused on whole person mentoring, the goals are growth and providing the support protégés need to allow that growth to continue in whatever direction it may lead. Whole person mentoring is one end of a continuum and at the other end is an approach I interpret as: hands-off mentoring, which is addressed below.

Hands-off Mentoring: Separation of Church and State

Contrary to the whole-person mentoring approach, some professors seek out the "separation of church and state," as one participant stated, by only engaging their students at the level of the work they are doing with one another. This approach often requires fairly strict boundaries related to time and conversational topics (see previous section for discussion on boundaries). These professors seem to be overly accommodating the negative face needs of themselves and the graduate student. In extreme cases, this hands-off approach can lead to emotionally abusive behaviors of ignoring and stonewalling students when they are seeking support.

When asked to describe his own mentoring style when working with graduate student protégés, Kevin, a social science professor, described the levels at which he is willing to engage the student:

> Well, I think you have to be super open to helping them do what they want to do. I've had some meaningful, enduring friendships with the doctoral students but almost always later. I kind of am a separation of church and state guy, so I want to keep my relationship with my doctoral students to be supportive and friendly and all of that, but I don't want it to be ... I don't need them to know a whole lot about me personally and I don't need to know a whole lot about them personally. If it evolves into a friendship later when maybe they're done and maybe they're a professor somewhere, I feel better about that then. So, I like a little bit of distance and I don't want it to be cold, but I want there to be some separation between church and state. I don't have doctoral students over to the house for a glass of wine or anything except maybe if in the old days when we had graduation ceremonies ... And in part because if there is an intimacy of working with someone on a doctoral level and you see them often struggling and struggling with lots of things going on in their lives because it's tough but I'm not the person ... I'm happy to be sympathetic to that, but I'm not the person to engage them on that level. I want to engage them on the level of their research and scholarship and keep it at that.

Kevin views his relationship with protégés as one that requires a certain level of intimacy because "you see them often struggling" with many different aspects in their lives. Unlike the whole person mentoring approach that would engage those aspects of the protégé's lived experience, Kevin sees that as a boundary he will not cross. Kevin, rather, does not want to share about his own personal life and does not want to engage the student on that level either. Importantly, he notes that this distance does not mean he is unsympathetic to the personal lives of his graduate protégés, however, he does not want to be the one that is going to engage them on that level.

Adam, social science professor, described the importance of creating separation between the personal lives of his graduate students and himself as well. Unlike Kevin, Adam shared that he *is* willing to disclose personal details about his life with his graduate students in an effort to humanize himself to his graduate students. Adam wants to share those personal aspects to let his students know it is ok for them to share personal details as well. However, in doing so, he does not expect reciprocation of sharing, and when they do disclose he makes it clear, they do not have to continue sharing:

> If it gets real personal, I'll say you don't have to tell me this. This is up to you. I don't need to know this. …I mean all of us will encounter serious stressors in our personal lives. Everybody, you don't live a life without having that. The network of people who can help you grow and heal and be okay through that stressors are, are hopefully, you know, friends, family, romantic partners who can make all of those things happen. And if any of my students got into a position where they were really in trouble, otherwise I would bend over backwards to make sure they got through. …but my feeling is, it's good to have a place where people care about you and can comfort you, that's not your mentor. 'Cause a lot of times I'm the one that's causing the stress! [Laughs] …I know that I create a lot of stress because of who I am, both in my high expectations, but also 'cause it's graduate school and graduate school sucks. And I am the embodiment of graduate school. … I wanted to say to [my students], I get it. You have to complain about me to somebody. Yeah. And I don't want to be there for that, but I also don't want to assume it's not happening. They, they need to feel stressed out about what I do and they need to manage what I say, but they can't have me manage it for them.

The role of mentoring graduate students, for Adam, puts him in a precarious position. While he wants to allow students to share their struggles with him as needed, he does not want to be the sole source of support for his students. Since Adam perceives he is often the source of the stress for his students as a faculty mentor, he also recognizes it is not healthy for students to also come to him to resolve that stress. In fact, if he were both the source of stress and the source of emotional security, it would potentially create the toxic dynamics of a disorganized attachment relationship (Stein, 2021). In her work on cults, Stein (2021) argued that one of the ways in which cult leaders control their followers is through disorganized attachment style in which the leader is both the cause of stress and terror, while at the same time the only known haven for the followers. Similarly, mentoring relationships can move into this toxic area if the protégé is solely relying on their mentor for emotional support alienating other sources of support, while simultaneously the mentor may often be the cause of extreme stress as the "embodiment" of graduate school. Thus, a degree of "separation of church and state" can help to protect the graduate student from total enmeshment of their lives with their mentor.

Another reason why mentors wanted to approach their protégés with more distance was an implicit method of professional socialization. In mentoring future academics, the profession requires a certain level of independence and self-reliance. Wilson, a professor in social science, mentioned that when his students reach the point of a dissertation, he wanted them to take the lead in the conversations:

> I am pretty, uh, hands-off sounds wrong, but it's up to them to do the initiative. You know, I am not going to send them a reminder every two months and say, 'Hey, are you doing what you're supposed to be doing?' … I don't monitor their progress and this is particularly true when I get to the dissertation phase. It's like, you know, if you give me

> something, I will read it within a week and get it back to you, continue to make progress. But if I get it back to you and I don't hear from you for two months, I am not going to chase you down and say like, why haven't I gotten anything for me? It's like, if it's, if it takes you two months, you know, that's your issue, not mine. … Once in a while I have somebody say, well, give me a deadline. And it's like, well, okay, why don't you have that done by the end of the month? I'll give a deadline, but it's like, I don't normally do that. You know, it's up to them too. And part of my reason for doing that is that they become professors. There's not going to be anybody doing that for them. Nobody's going to be saying like, well, have you, have you submitted any journal articles this semester? You know, nobody's going to be checking up on them. Um, you know, it's going to be totally up to them to get the initiative and, and get things done. And so, I, I feel that by taking that approach of like, it's up to you to get me things I'm not chasing you down, that should help prepare them for life after the dissertation.

The hands-off approach of Wilson, Kevin, and Adam is a way of creating space for the protégé to practice self-reliance through setting the terms of the work they are doing in their time as a graduate student. Self-reliance and individualism are core component of neoliberal ideology (de Souza, 2019) and that is manifest in the hands-off approach to mentoring. Self-reliance and individualism are directly connected to the negative face needs of graduate students, which are prioritized by creating the expectation that students will set the terms of the work schedule. Wilson creates the space for his protégés to maintain negative face by not setting deadlines for them unless they ask. Even, then, he mentions that he does not go out of his way to check-in on their progress towards degree completion. He views this as an important part of training them to be future academics by giving students the space to set the timeline and progress benchmarks.

Similarly, Henry, a natural science professor, viewed the hands-off approach as a way to help his students to take ownership of their studies:

> Um, I'm a hands-off type of person. I think that it's very important for graduate school, the students to take ownership of their studies and go with what they think is the right thing to do. …. And if they don't, I try to help them figure it out. … So ,I try to put them in a position where they're comfortable enough making decisions. …But I think that, uh, if what you want is a PhD in general…It's a leadership job. That's a part of what we do is try to instill leadership qualities in students. …. The idea is that they are the leaders for their own path.

Ultimately, Henry aims to allow his students to have the tools they need to make the decisions that are best for themselves. Henry views his role as a mentor as one who creates the circumstances and provide the knowledge and tools needed for students to make the best decision possible for their own goals as a future academic. Importantly, Henry notes that if his protégés do not know what "the right thing to do" is, he will "try to help them figure it out." He does not provide answers for the graduate students, or tell them what to do, rather, he wants to give them the leadership qualities that will enable them to make the best decisions for themselves. Part of those leadership qualities is learning to fail. Henry continued:

> It's good for them [students] to stumble into fall and to get up and move on… You cannot succeed without failure. If you [sic] so afraid to fail, you're so afraid that people will think that you're stupid, you don't do anything. It's okay to be stupid! I tell that to everybody. And I tell them that in our interaction, I will say some stupid things and I reserve the right and, actually, demand the right to be stupid! I think that one of the most important things to, to think about when you do research is most of the time you will

> fail… it's not going to work the way you think it should work. Sometimes these failures will provide incredible opportunities and sometimes they're just, you know, brick walls that you will not be able to pass through. …Our job is to go into very dark alleys that we don't know where they're going to take us to, but they look as if maybe there is some gold there and you go there and most of the time you don't find anything. And sometimes you do. And there is no way of knowing when you start where it's going to take. That's part of the excitement of doing research … And if what you want is to be a want is to be a scientist, then get used to failure and see your friend. It's not your enemy.

Embracing failure is a part of Henry's hands-off approach to mentoring. He wants his students to feel comfortable in taking risks and chances because, for him, that is an essential part of being a scientist. Thus, in his approach of mentoring graduate students, he not only wants his students to feel comfortable making mistakes and "looking stupid" he also demands that he, as the mentor, is allowed to do the same. By claiming the right to failure for himself, he is modeling that it is ok for his students to engage in work that may create potentially positive face threatening situations. He is encouraging them to take those risks needed that could potentially lead them to "gold," but is also normalizing the failure of not finding gold even when the researcher thought it was there to begin with. Henry, through his hands-off approach, perceives he is creating an opportunity for his students to feel comfortable with taking risks, even when it may violate their own positive-face by making them feel or look "stupid." Thus, Henry is demonstrating that even when taking a hands-off approach to mentoring, the mentor can still be concerned about the personal development of the graduate student in a way that honors their personhood through mitigating negative-face threats and reframing positive-face threats.

While giving space for graduate students to learn self-reliance can be beneficial for protégés development as future academics, there is a delicate balance between autonomy and support. Sophie, doctoral candidate in social science, found that when it came time for her to develop her dissertation proposal, her advisor's mentoring style suddenly flipped from a supportive and engaged mentor, to one that was unresponsive and unavailable. When describing the dissertation proposal writing process, Sophie explained:

> Once we got to the dissertation, it was very much like, "You do it yourself. I don't wanna talk to you. Oh, you're on your own." So, I received an email from her, uh, when I was in the middle of my dissertation kind of scrambling to figure it out that said, "I know you wanna talk to me right now, but I don't think it's a good idea. You need to come up with your hypotheses. You need to come up with a research question. You need to come up with all of this on your own and we can't talk until you do." Um, so this was really a drastic switch, and I was doing an experiment, something that I had never done before ever. And, um, between … the method, COVID, and me being the only one in my cohort who was at this stage in the, um, program, I felt extremely isolated. Um, and so I went from having full support from her to then her basically yanking what I like to say, the training wheels off and saying, okay, go do it. The difficult part in this is you're still a student, right. Even in, even in your dissertation phase, you are still very much a student in a program that needs support that needs guidance. I can understand go figure it out and do it once you're in the field, because at that point, you, you're no longer in a program you're now. You know, on your own. So, it was a drastic switch. Um, and she did not talk to me for two and a half months. Um, and so I was left to figure out my dissertation

> for two and a half months when, prior to that we were in constant contact. Like maybe once every two weeks we were either meeting or talking.

Sophie's mentor, gave her the space to maintain negative face needs as well as take ownership of the dissertation project by putting up a strict communication boundary until Sophie had developed a research question and hypothesis on her own. Unfortunately, in doing so, because Sophie lacked the support of others in her cohort and the larger context of the COVID-19 pandemic, rather than rising to the occasion (as the professor presumably hoped would happen) it made Sophie feel "extremely isolated." Sophie needed and desired informational support from her mentor to assist in the dissertation development process, especially since she was wanting to do a method she had never done before. Removing support too quickly can harm the relationship because Sophie no longer trusted her mentor would be a reliable source of support in the dissertation process.

Moreover, Sophie points out in important distinction here that the faculty members using hand-off mentoring thus far have not acknowledged: doctoral candidates are *still students*. As such, they are still learning how to be an academic and conduct research. Sophie wanted to use the dissertation as an opportunity to test the waters of doing a method she had never previously used. Previously, having constant contact and support from her mentor, she felt confident in that decision because if she needed help, she expected her advisor would be there to give guidance as needed. However, when the "training wheels" were "[yanked] off," Sophie was not prepared to go at it alone. Ultimately, after the two and half months of struggling to create the experiment on her own, Sophia decided to change her method. Sophie continued:

> Um, and so once I reached out to her and I said, you know, "I wanna switch my method. I don't know if I can pull off an experiment. I wanna do a survey. I'm far more

> comfortable with that. If I'm gonna have to do this all on my own, then, then let me, you know, do the method that I feel most confident doing." Um, she just wrote an email back. "Okay. Yeah, sure. No problem!" And then I wrote her an email, "Can we just talk like, can, can I just talk to you over zoom or something?" The first thing that she said over the zoom call to me was, "Well, I think you've suffered long enough." And so, it was this idea that like it was done intentionally to make me suffer as a student to know what it was like, because she suffered. And so, there's a lot of this I suffered, so you have to suffer mentality.

In this extreme perspective of hands-off mentoring, Sophie was subjected to "suffering" because that is how graduate training is often socially constructed. Perpetuating systems of trauma-based training does not support either the positive or negative face needs of the protégé. Rather, it makes the student withdraw from the mentor and from more challenging work. Sophie changed to a less challenging methodology for her dissertation because she did not feel confident in her ability to conduct an experiment on her own. Rather than providing her with the informational support to develop the confidence in negative face via autonomy to know she could do the experiment on her own, or esteem support to maintain Sophie's positive face to feel confident when engaging with her mentor, Sophie's mentor abruptly withdrew social support, which damaged Sophia's positive and negative face. Ultimately, Sophie believes this is because of the mindset that graduate students need to "suffer" Sophie's relationship with her mentor was damaged and after months passed she had to completely change her plan for her dissertation.

The hands-off mentoring approach is highly focused on the negative face needs of each party in the mentoring relationship. In the best-case scenarios, granting more autonomy to both individuals creates space for the protégé to create self-reliance and the skills needed to be a

successful future academic and to not become overly reliant on their mentor for all forms of social support. Moreover, for the mentor, a more hands-off approach allows them to maintain stricter boundaries with their protégés, thus creating less chance of burnout due to being overly available to their protégés. However, this approach can also lead to perpetuating the traumatic experiences from one mentor to the next generation of upcoming scholars. Hands-off mentoring walks a fine line between granting enough and too much autonomy for still learning graduate students.

Hands-On Mentoring: Directing the Pathway

There's a middle ground between the hands-off mentoring of some professors and the whole person mentoring of others. The middle ground is where the faculty member seeks to encourage a certain level of independence and autonomy while simultaneously recognizing a full scope of personhood for graduate students. While this does not quite engage the student at the same levels as whole person mentoring, it does encourage a balance of self-discovery and self-reliance within the context of supportive communication and instrumental intellectual process coaching from the mentor along the way. Intellectual process coaching (IPC) is a concept that emerged from the data as mentors and protégés described approaches to mentoring. IPC involves the knowledge creation and development of how to think about research processes. This involves research design, execution, data analysis, writing manuscripts and the publication process. Often, IPC happens in research projects outside of the classroom. Thus, hands-on mentoring of protégés will typically engage IPC at some level.

Ron, a social science professor, described his approach to mentoring as based in routine to encourage momentum towards degree completion. Similar to other participants (both faculty

and students) he described how he set regular meetings with each of his advisees on a weekly basis to help create a regular time of interaction with his advisees. He explained:

> And it also keeps my finger on the pulse when people aren't doing well and when they're floundering. Seems like those meetings get canceled. It's like if you cancel three times in a row with me I'm going to come find you and I'm going to be like 'What is up? Why are you hiding from me? What's the deal?' And they'll be like 'I can't write.' They'll tell me or whatever and we'll get them back on track. But other than that, when things are going well I've noticed that this is how it works. You've got to have consistent momentum. You've got to say before next time I'm going to write this, you write that, I'll read this, you read that. Whatever the case may be. So, I think routinized is a thing.

In creating the routine, Ron helps his protégés create a system of momentum to encourage progress towards degree completion. Unlike the hands-off mentoring approach, he is actively involved in the progress of his protégés and reaches out when it appears the student is "hiding" from him. Rather than choosing to engage with the mentor, protégés may be attempting to preserve their positive face when they say "I can't write" by avoiding engaging in the regularly scheduled meetings. Ron, takes this as a sign that he needs to intervene, which can be potentially face-threatening to the protégé by engaging in direct, bald-face questioning of "What is up? Why are you hiding from me? What's the deal?" At that point, the protégé can no longer hide behind the face-saving avoidance of all communication. By asking questions, Ron is a part of the process to "get them back on track." Rather than leaving it up to the graduate student, Ron takes on shared responsibility which requires him to be willing to violate the negative and positive face of the protégé, and sometimes himself in the process. He continued:

> I have a dissertation writer, she has her longitudinal data in and we were at the library working with the big screen up and we were crunching numbers and we were trying to make sense of it. It's exciting. Just nerding out on it. I love that process of working shoulder to shoulder with students, and even getting it wrong in front of them. I'll pitch, like maybe this means this and we'll go through it and nope, it doesn't mean that. Whatever, making those mistakes in real time in front of them, to me is a gift that says I don't get it right all the time. I basically get it wrong most of the time. But I do it enough that I find when I'm right and I gather all those together kind of thing. I think it demystifies that process of being a scholar. Then over time, over the years that I know them then I watch them do it and I see that they become badasses. It's awesome…. I think people really have to feel safe messing up. They've got to feel safe hearing that they could do better.

By working side-by-side with his protégé, Ron is able to not only coach her through the data analysis process, but also demonstrates the importance of making mistakes in the process of knowledge production. Moreover, Ron is willing to make mistakes and put himself into situations where his positive face can be threatened in front of his protégé. In doing so, he can model how to respond to failure and making mistakes in a way that creates the safety within the relationship so the protégé can be responsive when hearing "they could do better." Hands-on mentoring through intellectual process coaching (IPC) leans into mutually face-threatening acts as a way to normalize or mitigate the negative effects of the acts. By mutually engaging in face threatening acts, Ron actively creates a new bald-face threat. While these types of threats are typically seen as the most threatening types of speech acts, because Ron has higher status within

the relationship, engaging in face-threatening acts not only minimizes the threat of the act itself, it also minimizes Ron's status as well.

Arya, a social science graduate student, described her mentor as being open and inviting to all graduate students in the department. Because her mentor is junior faculty and working towards tenure, he is always looking for opportunities to engage in research projects. Because of this desire for research, Arya noticed that:

> So he really maintains almost like an open-door policy to graduate students and especially PhD students. So, they're always welcome to come talk to him. And specifically, to my experience, when I was getting ready for my comprehensive exams, I remember that the semester leading up to the comprehensive exam, we met every week. And we discussed about stuff. So, how to prepare for the comprehensive exam. And what are my findings? How am I incorporating all the theories that I'm reading with the topic that might become my dissertation topic and whatnot. So, he's very dedicated in that sense. And the other thing that I should highlight is that he's also very... he understands the value of time management in a graduate program. So, he would make sure that even though he's busy, he's giving you enough time, because he has taken you on as an advisee.

A hands-on mentor often creates an expectation of mutual benefit between the mentor and protégé. In describing her mentor, she mentioned his own desires for negative face of maintaining time boundaries so he can have autonomy, but also recognizing that he has a responsibility and commitment to the graduate students he has agreed to mentor. Moreover, when engaging with Arya as a protégé, he gave her the dedicated weekly time to adequately and confidently prepare for the comprehensive exams to advance in the program towards PhD

candidacy. By engaging in those conversations of preparation, the mentor helps the graduate student prepare, which likely supports the maintenance of positive face during the future defense of the comprehensive exams.

April, a social science graduate student, described her mentor as having a hands-on approach. When I asked her to explain what that meant, she described how she felt supported by her advisor in the planning stages of a recent study. She explained how her mentor provided intellectual process coaching:

> Well, I'm in a science field, but it's very theoretically motivated, because I work with humans. … You have to be really deliberate so you can save time and plan experiments. So, for her, [April's mentor] we planned an experiment by we would meet every single week, and it probably took half a semester just to think of the question we wanted to ask, I wanted to ask. So, it would be meeting every week, reading papers, thinking pretty critically about every angle that has or hasn't been explored. And then once I came up with a question, it was another few weeks that it was like, okay, but is that question really good to ask, and how we would test it? Then she was extremely involved with the development of the experiment and the recruitment of the participants and the analyses of the data. And there are some things that I do on my own. Obviously, I run subjects on my own. I recruited on my own, but she still guided me in that. I analyzed the data on my own. But she helps in being like, 'These are the types of analyses you probably want to do. This is who you want to talk to if you need help with this.'

Unlike the mentors described in the hands-off approach, April's mentor was involved in the various stages of the research process. April even uses the plural pronoun of "we" as she described much of the development process to think through the various stages of setting up her

study, demonstrating the communal nature to her mentoring experience (Afifi, et. al, 2020). Yet, April shifts to acknowledge the aspects of the study she completed independently. Throughout the process, her mentor gave her the suggestions and IPC she needed to successfully complete the study. So, when April describes her mentor as being "hands-on" it does not mean that the mentor is providing all the answers for April. Rather, April's mentor is there to guide her along the way to help her know how to answer the questions on her own.

Similarly, Virginia Strange, a humanities graduate student, also described her mentor in a way that was a hands-on approach:

> She is a good mix of hands-on when she needs to be or when I ask for it but she will also let me work and flourish on my own as needed to. We both email and text and sometimes texting is a little bit easier. I usually use email for more formal things that you would want in writing. She is I think ... Her advising style is just as much as I need when I need it but she is also a very good advocate for her advisees in departmental meetings, which is one of the reasons that I chose her too is she knows the department super well, knows what awards are available and what these processes look like, and how to navigate relationships with other faculty members and so I'm able ... I know that I'm going to be able to get the teaching sections that I want and be up in contention for awards and things like that.

Similar to the previous participants, Virginia Strange described how her mentor strikes a balance between support and autonomy. Additionally, she points out the importance of advocacy on behalf of protégés from the mentor. Virginia's mentor looks for those strategic opportunities of recognition through awards and teaching to advantage her protégés' positions within the department. Thus, a hands-on approach is not only concerned about the research development

and degree completion of the protégé, but also thinking about the bigger picture of developing the career of the graduate student through advocating for better teaching assignments and possible awards to recognize the work of student protégés as well.

Summary

This section has described a wide range of approaches to mentoring. I began by describing the ways in which mentoring practices are informed by epistemological commitments and researcher identity. From there, I described three general approaches to mentoring: whole person mentoring, hands-off mentoring, and hands-on mentoring. Whole person mentoring is a deeply engaged form of mentoring which requires a high level of concern for the protégé's negative and positive face wants. Hands-off mentoring sets clear boundaries on the mentoring relationship between the protégé and mentor; this style prioritizes the negative face concerns of both the mentor and protégé in hopes of facilitating self-reliance for the graduate student. Finally, hands-on mentoring is a middle ground between the previous two mentoring styles. Through intellectual process coaching (IPC) mentors are involved throughout the learning processes for their protégés to ensure they have the tools for success. This approach is concerned for both parties' negative and positive face needs/desires and often employs an asymmetrical power-dynamic to model how to navigate face-threating situations.

Summary of Findings

Three major themes emerged from the interview data based on the lived experiences of mentors and protégés in academia: (1) Setting boundaries and face threatening speech acts; (2) Academic identity and mentoring; and (3) Mentoring as praxis. Each theme is summarized below.

In the first theme related to boundaries, participants described the ways in which mentors often set the terms of the relationship through implicit and explicitly communicated boundaries around time, communication media, and topics of conversation. By placing the needs of the student first, mentors were negotiating the ways in which they could be present for their protégés in meaningful ways that does not overly violate the face needs of the student, and thus damaging the relationship. Protégés made sense of their mentor's expectations through direct communication with mentors and observing the ways in which they implicitly set boundaries through messages from mentors and work-life balance of their mentors.

While some mentors and protégés maintained strict boundaries, some engaged in more blurred lines when it came to boundary setting. Openness to engaging students at any level of their personhood is important for protégés to feel as though their mentor is a safe person to express the full range of their lived experiences. Sharing openly with a mentor can be a face-threatening act for one or both parties. While openness is an important quality in the mentoring relationship, it still requires a certain level of boundary work. Mentors need to provide support and tools, but not be the one to solve the problems of protégés for them. Both parties need to maintain some level of autonomy. For mentors, they need autonomy to protect their own time and capacity for the full range of their work. Protégés on the other hand, need enough support that they do not feel completely isolated, yet still enough autonomy that they can take ownership of their work and lean into their own self-efficacy. When mentors do not have enough boundaries, it can lead to burnout.

Second, through the dialogic engagement of a mentoring relationship, mentors and protégés enacted academic identities. It is by and through this relationship that the participants described the ways in which new academics were socialized into the professional identity. While

graduate students learn the content and concepts in the classroom, it is the one-on-one mentoring outside of the classroom that truly socializes protégés into the field of academia and what it means to be a "good academic." The implicit messages of what it means to be an academic, pushes students and their faculty mentors to over perform, and reinforces a lack of confidence in protégés perceptions of their own capabilities. These findings also revealed that one's academic identity is often closely tied to one's social identities. Research is one way in which academics found a connection to a higher purpose as it connected to their social identities. For others, finding mentors that were willing to acknowledge the unique struggles that come with being underrepresented in academia made a difference in feeling as though they belong and want to complete their programs. Becoming an academic and owning the academic identity is full of contradictions. For some, graduate school is the first time in their lives they are told their work is not good enough, and thus, one of the first times they are challenged directly in relation to their academic performance or intelligence, which is face threatening. Higher education institutions, according to some participants, are based on structures that harm the mental wellbeing, which is reinforced through uncertainty and a culture of overworking. Finally, graduate education and being a member of academia in general is a unique challenge that is difficult to explain to anyone that is not an insider. Thus, academics (both novice and veteran) are challenged with finding the social support they need outside of the academy.

Finally, these findings discussed how mentoring is a form of praxis for mentors. The research mentors do in their chosen field often informed how they approached mentoring their graduate students. Building upon their academic identity, mentoring relationships were a way in which mentors could enact their epistemological commitments beyond the research they produce. Moreover, the field in which the mentor produces research can inform how they view

mentoring. Three general approaches to enacting mentoring emerged from the data. First, whole person mentoring approached the mentoring relationship by thinking about the whole person of the protégé – not just their student identities. Mentors and protégés that described how this approach does not separate the career mentoring from a person's identity and personal life. In contrast to whole person mentoring, hands-off mentoring solely focused on the career and education of the protégé. Creating strict boundaries between the faculty member and graduate student maintains the autonomy of both parties but can also lead to harmful or toxic relationships when pushed to the extreme. The final approach to mentoring was a blended approach of the previous two approaches: Hands-on Mentoring. Hands-on mentoring focused on intellectual process coaching through side-by-side instruction and close engagement between the mentor and protégé. While this approach may have more boundaries on time, space, and topics of conversation, it is focused on a balance of support and autonomy.

Throughout this section, the overlap of boundaries, academic identity, and approaches to mentoring have been discussed, as they relate to politeness theory and literature in identity and pedagogy. In the next chapter, I will discuss the research questions, scholarly contributions, theoretical and practical implications of the findings from this data, as well as the limitations and future directions.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Based on the findings from chapter 4, I will now revisit the research questions posed at the beginning of this study. The first two research questions focused on perceptions of face threatening speech acts and the mentor-protégé relationship. These questions were:

RQ1: How, if at all do, mentors/protégés accounts of FTAs reveal their considerations of the other party's face needs?

RQ2: How do mentors/ protégés perceive their face needs were met and/or threatened during accounts of FTAs?

Throughout the data, both participant groups revealed instances where the other party's face was and was not considered by the other party. Alternatively, the parties were also aware of how their own face needs were met and threatened during accounts of their mentoring relationships. Since these two questions were often related in the data, findings related to FTAs and self/other face needs will be discussed in conjunction with each theme.

In theme one, the data revealed the ways in which boundary setting is an inherently face threatening act. Communicating boundaries within mentoring relationships has the potential to threaten positive face of each party. Depending on how the mentor approaches setting a boundary with their protégé, it can reflect poorly on their own likability if the mentor is perceived as cold, inaccessible, or unavailable. Alternatively, boundary setting can be face threatening to the protégé if they are making a request of the mentor and is rejected based on boundary norms. Thus, mentors were conscientious of the face of their protégés by using redressive, implicit communication. Rather than explicitly stating boundaries which would be bald-face on-record FTAs, mentors used implicit messages of timing their responses, only using certain channels, and avoiding topics of conversation with protégés.

Moreover, setting boundaries is a way in which both parties' negative face needs can be met. In order to be able to act freely without the demands of others, setting boundaries with others is key to maintaining that freedom. For example, when a mentor sets boundaries around when they are willing to communicate with their protégés, it maintains their own negative face needs by putting limits on days and times they will interact with one another. Moreover, these boundaries help the protégé to know they also are allowed to have that autonomy and space to themselves as well. Thus, in turn, their own negative face is being honored in the process as well. While mentors were often more cognizant of the face needs of their protégés, not all faculty felt the considerations were reciprocated. Interestingly, those in lower positions of power seemed to feel less obligated to honor the negative face needs of those in higher positions of power. When the negative face needs of the mentors were not being honored by the protégés, it led to burnout for a few of the participants. Thus, even though those in power have more opportunity and social capital to violate the face needs of those in lower positions of power, their own face needs still need to be considered within the relationship.

Theme two discussed the ways in which academic identity was communicated through mentoring relationships. Academic identity formation and positive validation of that identity within protégés was one of the ways in which mentors affirmed and honored the positive face needs of their protégés. For instance, when students were told they had "found their academic voice" or heard similarly affirming messages, it boosted graduate students' confidence. Moreover, affirming messages offer esteem support to protégés. Positive feedback lets the protégé know the mentor thinks well of them, and thus maintains the positive face needs of graduate students. While esteem support honors one's positive face, graduate education is often one of the first times protégés experience FTAs related to their academic identity as an

intellectual. The structures of certain academic programs which demonstrate what criteria are required to become a "good academic" can also be face threatening. While organizational tools like performance reviews can create transparency and facilitate identity affirming conversations, they can also be incredibly face threatening. If a protégé perceives they are not meeting the requisite criteria for successful achievement, it is threatening to one's confidence and reputation. Thus, positive face is often at stake when receiving feedback related to professional identity.

Finally, theme three, Mentoring as Praxis, demonstrates the ways in which approaches to mentoring honor face needs by looking at both politeness theory and face negotiation theory concepts. Whole person mentoring typically engages an other-face orientation when it comes to facework related to mentoring. The mentors in this category demonstrated concern for the face of the graduate students by emphasizing the protégé's personhood and needs over their own. The facework here is not only concerned with the aspects of the social self-image of the protégé as it pertains to their academic identity, but also their social self-image outside of that context as well. Thus, whole person mentoring engages both the positive and negative face needs and emphasizes development of those two aspects of the protégé more so than the face needs of the mentor.

In hands-on mentoring, both parties are engaged in mutually validating facework as they work side-by-side through various research endeavors. As the mentor provides supportive and developmentally appropriate opportunities for the student to develop their academic identity, it creates opportunities for both parties to engage in preventative and restorative facework communication. Mentors can model the entirety of the intellectual processes involved in research which often involves coaching through failure. In doing so, they put their own face at risk, but also demystify the struggles inherent to academia. Thus, the negative and positive face needs of self-face and other-face are of concern for both parties within this type of mentoring relationship.

Finally, hands-off mentoring prioritizes the negative face needs of both parties. As mentors orient towards autonomy, both parties are allowed the space to engage in facework that fully honors the negative face needs of the self. This orientation can facilitate students' self-reliance and better prepare them for future careers as academics. Thus, in fostering a sense of self-reliance and self-efficacy, the mentor is also engaging in facework that honors the other-face orientation of assisting the protégé to engage in professional development. However, if the mentor is only concerned with self-face preservation communication and not concerned with the protégés' development, hands-off mentoring can result in harmful situations for the protégé. A complete lack of concern for the other party does not create an environment in which students can thrive professionally or personally.

While the previous two research questions were focused on the connection between FTAs and mentoring relationships, the third question turned focus towards the ways in which participants communicated their professional identity. The third research question asked,

RQ3:How do mentors/protégés communicate, enact or perform their academic identity in mentoring relationships?

As revealed through the second theme, academic identity was directly tied to mentoring relationships for both mentors and protégés in academia. The first way in which academic identity was enacted was through the professional socialization of graduate students (Kramer, 2010). Mentoring provided the important intellectual process coaching that happens in spaces beyond the classroom. While graduate programs are structured to have classes to teach students the content of their discipline, the socialization into how to be an academic or researcher often happens beyond the classroom.

I propose that the academic identity formation for graduate students happens in a three-part process. First, students engage in self-stigma which is induced by neoliberal discourse (de Souza, 2019). Neoliberal stigma “occurs when markers of hard work, personal responsibility, and economic citizenship are applied in a variety of contexts, creating social distance between groups” (de Souza, 2019, p. 22). Implicit messages regarding what it means to be a successful academic reinforce notions of self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, and freedom of choice. Hands-off mentoring encourages self-sufficiency and personal responsibility of the protégé. Further, certain disciplines encourage self-sufficiency through preference of single authored manuscripts over research team-based approaches.

The second step in the academic identity formation is organizational osmosis of workaholism (Gibson & Papa, 2000). Organizational osmosis is defined as, “seemingly effortless adoption of the ideas, values, and culture of an organization on the basis of preexisting socialization experiences (Gibson & Papa, 2000, p. 79). When protégés observe the behaviors of peers further along in the program or their own mentors over performing, it constructs uncertainty, lack of confidence, and negative mental health outcomes for protégés. For example, graduate students observed their mentors working long hours, working seven days a week, producing large numbers of publications, all while keeping up with mentoring, other service activities, and teaching. These work-a-holic behaviors were normalized throughout the culture of academia and internalized by protégés.

The third step in this process came in the form of social support that contradicts the work habits and neoliberal ideology of the academy. Mentors’ explicit messages of support resisted some of these norms regarding overworking or self-doubt. Whole person and hands-on mentoring approaches create structural resistance to the neoliberal ideologies of self-sufficiency

and personal responsibility because the mentors are actively participating in the intellectual process coaching and recognizing the holistic personhood of the protégé – not just the aspects of oneself that are producing work for the marketplace of ideas. And yet, these moments of resistance create a paradox for novice academics because on the one hand they are being implicitly told messages of what it means to be a "good academic" which reinforces the neoliberal ideology, but on the other, through explicit messages of social support and positive feedback from their mentors, protégés are encouraged to believe that they belong in the academy.

Based on the discussion of the answers to the above research questions, the following sections will expand on the ways in which these findings contribute to the literature on mentoring, identity, and socialization. Next, I address theoretical contributions to politeness theory. Finally, I conclude with practical implications, limitations, and future directions.

Contributions to Literature

This study furthers our understanding of mentoring by offering a new typology of mentoring based on politeness theory and face-negotiation theory. Through the data, three types of mentors emerge: hands-on mentors, hands-off mentors, and whole person mentors.

Mentoring Literature

While there is a robust body of literature on mentoring, as evidenced by my literature review, the present study makes many contributions to this scholarship. First, the findings here indicate that much of the mentoring for graduate student protégés happens outside of the classroom through informal, idiosyncratic structures. While specific programs will have certain requirements of each student to graduate, most programs do not have requirements that engage psychosocial mentoring which has previously been shown as central in positively predicting research productivity and subsequent research self-efficacy (Pagilis, et al., 2006).

Intellectual process coaching is a key contribution from this research to mentoring literature as well. While previous research had defined coaching specific to navigating the political structures within the organization (Kram, 1985), this study presents ways in which coaching extends into intellectual processes development novice academics. Intellectual process coaching (IPC) involves developing skills and ability required in teaching, knowledge creation, and research processes. For my participants, this involves coaching protégés work such as developing curriculum, designing research, execution of research, writing manuscripts and the publication process. While some classes may start this process for graduate students (e.g. pedagogy/methods seminars), more often, IPC happens in outside of the classroom. The ability to cultivate a robust level of competence as a professional academic requires more time than 16 weeks in a semester the typical semester provides. Thus, the very nature of IPC is necessarily an ongoing process occurring throughout the duration of the entire graduate program.

Additionally, the approaches to mentoring described in the findings offer a more nuanced understanding of the three approaches to mentoring described in the literature review and connects them to face needs. Traditional mentoring most closely aligns with the hands-off mentoring approaches described by the participants in this study. Both approaches value strict boundaries and asymmetrical power dynamics and ultimately manifest a self-face orientation. Hands-on and whole person mentoring, on the other hand, do not as perfectly align with the relational or feminist mentoring approaches described previously.

While both hands-on and whole person mentoring value the relationship and broaden the assumptions regarding the ways each party benefits from mentoring relationships, the data here present some interesting differences. First, when it comes to hands-on mentoring, these types of relationships can still engage in asymmetrical power dynamics. Hands-on mentoring uses power

in ways that mutually support the development of both protégés and mentor. While the protégé may experience more autonomy or a higher degree of relational connectedness, this approach does not necessarily dismantle power dynamics (see figure 3 and discussion below).

Moreover, while whole person mentoring shares many of the same characteristics of the feminist mentoring approaches described by Cobb-Roberts, et al. (2017), I found that often whole person mentoring goes beyond the criteria of feminist mentoring. Whole person mentoring takes a more intersectional approach to mentoring to think about the individual holistically – not just those aspects related to the organizational context. The other-face orientation to whole person mentoring embraces intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and holistically considers barriers to success and well-being of protégés. While feminist mentoring does attempt to challenge assumptions about power and emotional labor of academics, as it is characterized in the literature, feminist mentoring still resides exclusively within the context of academia.

Finally, these findings also contribute to the literature on dysfunctional mentoring. As stated previously, dysfunctional mentorship is, "one in which (a) the primary needs of one or both partners are not being met, (b) the long-term costs for one or both partners outweigh the long-term benefits, or (c) one or both partners are suffering distress as a result of being in the mentorship" (Johnson & Huwe, 2002, p. 45). While each of the approaches to mentoring above (i.e. whole person, hands-on, and hands-off mentoring) had positive outcomes, each had some examples of dysfunction as well.

An extreme hands-off mentor does not meet the intellectual process coaching needs of the protégé, and often prioritizes the mentor's needs over those of the protégé. When mentors and protégés do not have clear boundaries or become overly available to one another, it can also create a dysfunctional relationship, which can occur in whole-person mentoring. As mentioned

by a few mentors, when they were too invested in the whole person mentoring, it led to burnout. Hands-on mentoring does employ power dynamics in its use of intellectual process coaching. If not kept in check, power dynamics can easily cause rigidity in the mentoring relationship and lead to distress. This research shows how dysfunctional mentoring not only has implications for the protégé, but also how the dyadic relationship impacts the mentor as well. Just because a person is in a position of power, it does not protect them from the negative impacts of a dysfunctional relationship. Thus, the findings here build upon previous notions of mentoring and offer more nuances into the full range and variety of approaches which exist within the academic mentoring space.

Identity/Identification & Contradictions of Neoliberal Identity

Academic identity formation process described in chapter four contributes to the existing literature on professional identity and identification. Similar to the findings of Russo (1998), the participants in this study more strongly identified with their profession than they did with their particular organization. Moreover, this study shows how professional identification is performed through the socialization processes for new members of academia.

Socialization

These findings also contribute to organizational socialization literature (Jablin, 1984; Kramer, 2010). This study demonstrates the ways in which professional socialization creates ingroup-outgroup status through mentor-protégé relationships. As graduate students are learning to become members of the ingroup (academics), they do not have the same ingroup status that their mentors can claim as professionals in the field and full-time employees of the university. Upon graduation as a form of voluntary organizational exit (Kramer, 2010), graduate students who are able to find employment in academia enter into a new institution of higher education and

then become ingroup members of the profession. Until that point, graduate students are often caught in a liminal state of contingent group membership (Hepler, 2021) that leads to a paradox. Hepler (2021, p. 35) defines contingent group membership as, “a status/type of group membership that exists within a liminal space of identification where they simultaneously belong, yet do not belong to a target social group.” Graduate students are expected to produce labor similar to professional academics, but do not have a full scope of knowledge, training, power or authority to function as a member of the profession. “Being a contingent member implies identification with the group on some level and acceptance from group members with conditions and limitations” (Hepler, 2021, p. 33). Some faculty mentors, namely those using a whole-person or hands-on approach, may treat protégés as peers, yet graduate students do not have the organizational or professional claims to the ingroup status as faculty members do. I interpret graduate student protégés experiences as a professional socialization paradox.

This professional socialization paradox is further complicated by the temporary organizational membership status of graduate students. Graduate students are a group that will likely never reach full professional metamorphosis before they exit the organization (Gist, 2016). Because graduate students never fully become insiders of the organization where they complete their graduate training, they have fewer claims to autonomy and less power to make change within the organization during the short time they are in graduate programs. Moreover, because graduate students do not fully reach metamorphosis in the profession during their graduate education, they do not fully become in-group members of the profession until they are well into their next role as a new faculty member at a new institution. It is important to note that many graduate students leave academia and never enter the profession, which is often an assumed career path, especially for doctoral students.

Some graduate programs attempt to reduce the social distance between faculty and graduate students by having a low-power distance orientation (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998) by including graduate students in the decision-making processes or opportunities to provide input in the departmental decision-making processes. While on the surface, this participatory communicative process of consent may appear to be egalitarian, as Deetz (2002) points out, consent often is an even more effective form of control than coercion. When low-power orientations exist at the departmental level, but not throughout the organization, it creates a misrepresentation of agency (Deetz, 2002) for those with less organizational power. When individuals perceive they have more agency than the organization actually allows, it creates opportunity for organizations to have more domination over the individual's activity within the organization with little to no resistance. Thus, when mentors perpetuate cycles of suffering, which emerged in lived experiences of participants, protégés may implicitly consent to their own domination (e.g. hegemony; Gramsci, 1971). As organizational communication scholars continue to analyze socialization processes, identity and power should be central considerations in order to complicate the ways in which organizational members participate in that process (Allen, 1996).

Contributions to Theory

I offer two major contributions to theory based on the data in this study. First, I propose a theoretical perspective of academia as the field of intellectual production based on Bourdieu's (1987) theory of cultural production. Second, I discuss the ways in which these findings contribute to our understanding of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The Field of Intellectual Production

Organizational culture based on the departmental culture, institutional culture, or culture of one's discipline encourages either a tendency towards an individualistic or collectivistic organizational culture. Experiences of participants in this study demonstrated a strong Western value towards individualism and academic freedom in the U.S. system of higher education.

Academic freedom and neoliberal ideology are increasingly intertwined. Academic freedom, for instance, allows academics to publish on topics without fear of backlash or infringement from the university, but achieving tenure requires academics to participate in a system that rewards the neoliberal values of personal responsibility, hard work, and economic citizenship through the knowledge production processes. Professional practices/norms like promotion and tenure perpetuate neoliberalism within the academy. Moreover, the values of neoliberalism undergird a preference for valuing negative face of the self when at work for academics. Bourdieu (1987) argues that in a particular field of production (e.g. academia) one maintains legitimacy by accumulating various forms of capital. Specifically, symbolic capital "refers to the degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honor and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge and recognition" (p. 7). Academics claim prestige through their expertise in the field, number of publications, invited presentations, and innovations in the field culminating in symbolic capital.

Symbolic capital is fueled by an individual's capacity to create and maintain positive face through prestige-giving activities, as well as being able to claim negative face to complete those activities which increase the likelihood of participating in the prestige activities. In other words, the more autonomy an academic has over time, the more capacity that academic has to complete research. Hence, the more research that is produced by that academic, the more likely that person

will be invited to present at conferences and publish their research. As one builds their reputation in the field, one is perceived more positively by others in that field, and thus positive face is enhanced. In short, positive and negative face work together to create a positive feedback loop which results in symbolic capital.

Those who are on a tenure-track line are expected to maintain high levels of achievement (which often begins in graduate school) to obtain promotions. Within the higher education system, those that are not participating in this system because they are instructors, lecturers, visiting professors, or even adjunct faculty experience social distance and stigma within institutions of higher education (Hepler, 2021). These non-tenure-track positions are typically paid less, have less employment security, and less organizational power. Moreover, those who achieve tenure typically have more autonomy over time, classes to be taught, service expectations, and gain more organizational power/status/authority. Ultimately, the system is reinforcing the negative face needs of autonomy, and when those negative face needs are met through promotion, it reinforces the positive face needs of the professional academic and their academic identity. In other words, as Magee and Galinsky (2008) explain, power and status beget more power and status because they are self-reinforcing.

The more individuals can claim their own negative and positive face needs throughout organizational structures, the more social capital they will have within the organization as well. My analysis explains how mentoring functions as a process within the field of intellectual production. Whole person mentoring focuses on the social capital for the protégé from an other-face orientation. Through this relationship, the protégé's reputation is the focus of the interactions in the relationship. As mentors focus on building the social capital of protégés, it can come at the expense of their own social capital because mentoring/teaching/service are less

valued activities by the institution, and thus have little reward. Moreover, because much of the labor in this relationship is outside the scope of the expectations of what constitutes a "good academic," the mentor is working outside the bounds of the professional context, which does not contribute to the social capital of the mentor but will potentially support the ability of the protégé to thrive. Hands-on mentoring (mutual-face orientation) fosters social capital for both protégé and mentor simultaneously as they work side-by-side. Because both parties are working together to build reputations (capital) through collaborative efforts, the social capital in this relationship is mutually dependent. Finally, hands-off mentoring (self-face orientation) fosters social capital for the mentor and protégé independently based on individual performance. While the mentor may be giving some direction and guidance along the way, both parties are working independently and creating social capital that is more distinct from one another's labor efforts. Thus, depending on the ways in which one engages mentoring, it will have an influence on the amount and type of social capital one can claim in the field of intellectual production.

Politeness Theory & Face Negotiation Theory

This research furthers our understanding of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) by incorporating the ways in which professional identity can be perceived as an ingroup status, which then informs politeness behaviors. While the work of Ting-Toomey (1988) proposed the ways in which cultural background influences facework, this dissertation applies the concept into the socialization process of moving from outgroup member to ingroup member as graduate students are socialized into academia by faculty mentors. Specifically, face negotiation theory helps to explain the ways in which approaches to mentoring are influenced by power-distance norms within organizational culture and individual relationships.

In Figure 3, I have mapped out the ways in which orientation towards high/low power distance and independent/interdependent self-construal orientations align with approaches to mentoring. On one axis, the relationships range from low- to high-power distance orientations. In low-power distance orientations the mentor-protégé relationship strives to have equal power in the relationship through mutual decision-making and consultation of the protégé in the process by the mentor (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). In high-power distance orientations, the power is centralized in the mentor's organizational position. Thus, a tenured, full professor would have more organizational power than a newly hired junior faculty member; graduate students in this orientation would have very little organizational power.

The second axis represents the range between independent and interdependent self-construal orientations. Individuals with an independent self-construal "value 'I-identity' personal achievement, self-direction, and competition" and tend to have a self-face orientation more so than an other-face orientation (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998, p. 196). On the other hand, the interdependent self-construal emphasizes relational connectedness. Thus, these individuals "want to fit in with others, act appropriately, promote others' goals and value relational collaboration" and have more other- and/or mutual-face orientations (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998, p. 196).

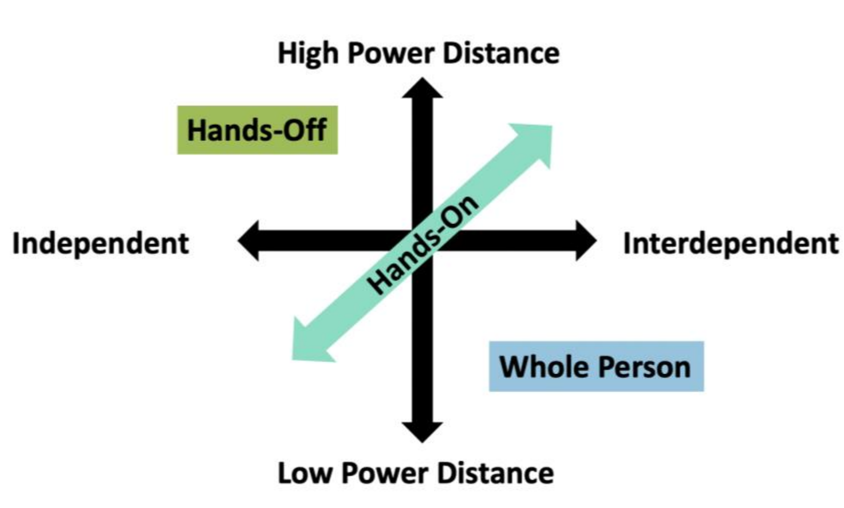

Figure 2: Mentoring Typology Model

Using these dimensions as guides, the following propositions can be made about mentoring approaches. Hands-off mentoring involves a high-power distance and a high level of independent self-construal for at least the mentor. The mentor in these relationships are concerned about self-face and engage the students only at the level of their scholarship. This relationship encourages personal achievement and self-direction. Moreover, this type of relationship reinforces those aspects of neoliberal ideology more so than other mentoring orientations. Because of the high-power orientation of the relationship, even if the protégé is more oriented towards interdependent self-construal, the mentor's organizational power will trump the desire for relational connectedness.

Hands-on mentoring presents a more complicated understanding of the power-orientation and self-construal orientations. Depending on the nature of the individual relationship, the hands-on mentoring approach could result in multiple variations of orientations. As depicted on the model, this orientation can span the range of Independent/Low-Power to Interdependent/High-Power orientations. The experiences of hands-on mentoring participants demonstrated this range of possibilities. For example, some participants described relationships in which the mentor and

protégé maintained a high level of independent self-construal where each party emphasized self-direction from the protégé side, but at the same time, each viewed the other as an equal in the partnership. At the other end of the spectrum, hands-on mentors oriented towards high-power and interdependent self-construal. Within these relationships, the power of the mentor was more pronounced through mechanisms like timelines, routine check-ins, and direct involvement in the intellectual process coaching where the protégé deferred to the mentor's expertise. At the same time, these mentors valued the relationship by promoting the goals and aspirations of the protégé. While these may be the two extremes of the spectrum, there were also variations across the range of orientations for hands-on mentoring relationships.

Finally, whole person mentoring is highly interdependent and has a low-power distance orientation. Most of the participants that engaged in whole person mentoring or described their mentors as engaging in whole person mentoring talked about the importance of the relationship between the mentor and protégé. If one cares about the personhood of a protégé beyond the work context, it is likely that they care about the relationship itself. It requires the mentor to engage the protégé in their personal goals beyond the academy. Both parties have equal footing in the whole person mentoring relationship – even if organizationally the faculty member has more power. As the two interact with one another, they view one another sharing the responsibility and working towards relational collaboration.

Practical Implications

Phronetic research aims to answer questions about practical communication problems. Thus, this research has many practical applications for both mentors and protégés, which can be arguably translated to many types of supervisor-subordinate relationships. First, this study demonstrated that many boundaries were communicated implicitly through observation of

mentor communication behaviors. While some mentors may want to have an open-door policy when it comes to boundaries, this can lead to burnout and less compassion towards protégés. Thus, I recommend that mentors explicitly communicate boundaries with their protégés at the beginning of the relationship or renegotiate those boundaries throughout the relationship as needed. Communicating those expectations reduces uncertainty for both parties and protects both from burnout or expectancy violations.

Second, professional development should be available for all graduate students. The intellectual process coaching of some graduate students was not universally experienced. Moreover, some of the tacit information about job search and conference preparation was also not equitably communicated to all graduate students. In many graduate programs, individual professional development will vary depending on the mentor's willingness and ability to provide it to the protégé. Therefore, graduate programs should create program structures that support professional development opportunities for all graduate students so it is not put on the shoulders of individual mentors. Professional development programs will ideally help to distribute the labor of socialization regarding graduate student training across faculty. Individual programs will need to carefully craft these programs to ensure the programming is not unfairly placed on junior faculty or underrepresented faculty. This type of programming will benefit graduate students that may not receive this training otherwise.

While this research has offered various views of mentoring, no approach is necessarily better than another. Ultimately, mentors should individualize their approach to each student's needs. Mentors should be committed to maintaining a fiduciary relationship with their protégés. In doing so, one student may need a more hands-on approach, while another may respond better to whole person mentoring. Rather than taking a one-size-fits all approach, mentors should

evaluate the individual needs of each student and expand their competency so they can adapt accordingly. While this will require more time and effort than a one-size-fits all universal approach to mentoring, it will offer the student the most potential for success.

Limitations

While I offered many contributions from this data, there were a few limitations of this study. First, I only used one type of data: interviews. While the data did come from two different organizational role groups and demographically diverse set of participants, the nature of the data relies solely on semi-structured interviews. Additionally, these interviews only have the single perspective of one person in the dyad. I only recruited individuals, not dyads of mentors and protégés. Thus, the perspectives provided here only capture one side a relationship which is co-constructed by two individuals. Finally, all participants were either attending or employed by universities in the United States. While a few participants were international students, the perspectives predominantly reflected the cultural norms of Western institutions of higher education. Mentoring in other cultural contexts will likely be different than the perspectives provided here.

Future Directions

Academic mentoring was an exciting topic for this study and offers many opportunities for future research. First, continuing this line of research would benefit from dyadic interviews of mentors and their protégés. Dyadic interviews could provide further insights into the facework of both parties and perspectives of facework competence. Additionally, finding opportunity to directly observe the communication between a mentor and protégé as they work with one another would potentially provide unmediated insights into the mentoring relationship. Finally, looking for other contexts of mentoring would provide opportunity to see if the typology of mentoring

described here exist in other contexts. Since this research focused on knowledge workers, I would want to look at areas of mentoring or apprenticeships that rely on other forms of work such as tattooing, electricians, carpentry, or cosmetology. Many of these blue-collar occupations or body work (Dougherty, 2011) industries rely on mentoring in similar, yet distinct ways when compared to academia. Thus, it would be beneficial to the larger literature on mentoring outside of knowledge work or white-collar contexts to further understand the communicative processes of mentoring across the workforce.

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Appendix A

Protégé Interview Protocol

Date/Time of Interview:

Place of Interview:

Interview Facilitator(s):

Participant Pseudonym:

PURPOSE STATEMENT: This research seeks to better understand mentor/mentee relationships between faculty and graduate through advice giving conversations. As we talk today, I want you to focus on your relationship with your thesis/dissertation chair when you respond to the questions.

Before interview: Please pick a pseudonym that you can go by. This is to protect your identity by keeping it confidential.

<u>Interview Questions</u>

Orientation to topic:

1. How does the mentoring/advising process in your department typically work?
2. How would you describe your mentor's mentoring style?
    a. How is your mentor's style similar or different to other faculty in the department?
    b. Have you seen examples of what does/doesn't work?
3. What qualities, skills, or abilities do you think make for a good mentor?
    a. Is being emotionally aware/sensitive one of them?
4. What kinds of things do you typically talk about in your meetings with your mentor?
5. How often do you talk about your progress with your mentor? Is this a formal or an informal process? (like do you wait until an annual review to discuss progress? Why?)
6. Did you receive any training on how to work with your mentor? How did you form expectations for what this relationship would be like?
7. How do you maintain boundaries with your mentor? Do you think anything is ever off limits? Have you ever had to push your boundaries? (Examples: personal relationships, health and wellness, topics not directly related to work, sex, etc.)
8. How does your mentor communicate with you? Do you have rules about contacting one another?
9. Describe relational norms you have established with your mentor.

Transition statement: Now that we have an idea of your relationship and understanding of mentoring, I'd like to dive deeper into some of the conversations you've had with your mentor. In this next section I want to hear about times you've received advice, feedback, and praise from your mentor – it can be positive, negative, neutral, or corrective.

Face-Threatening Acts:

1. Tell me about a time when you received feedback from your mentor.

2. Tell me about a time when you felt like you were not meeting your mentor's expectations. What did you say to them? What did they say to you?
3. What advice has your mentor given to you when you felt like you were struggling?
    a. How does it make you feel to have these conversations?
4. Tell me about a time when you had a confrontational talk with a mentor.
5. Tell me about a time when you felt your mentor did <u>not</u> have your best interest in mind.
6. Tell me about a time when you felt your mentor did have your best interest in mind.
7. Has there ever been a time when you felt like you were getting off track and your mentor guided you back to where you needed to be? What did they say?
8. Describe a time you received unsolicited or unwelcomed advice from your mentor.
    a. How did you feel about your mentor after that conversation?
9. Can you tell me about a time when you had a conversation that was awkward for either you and/or your mentor? How did you handle it?
10. Can you tell me about conversational mistakes you have made when having difficult conversations with your mentor?
11. Think about a turning-point you had with your mentor. What were the conversations like that led you to the turning-point?
12. When you have to hear bad news from your mentor, how do they typically deliver it? What about good news?
    a. Do you like the ways they choose to share this news? Would you change it?
13. What considerations do you have when you are preparing for a potentially confrontational conversation?
14. **if participant has worked with more than one advisor during doctoral program* How* did you know it was time to switch mentors? How did you tell your previous mentor you were no longer going to work with them?
15. What is a piece of advice you would give to a colleague that is about to have a potentially confrontational talk with their mentor?

Emotional Communication:

16. Have you ever communicated your feelings/emotions to your mentor?
    a. How did they respond?
17. Tell me about a time when you thought your mentor was emotionally intelligent.
18. Tell me about a time when you were unexpectedly emotional in a meeting.
    a. When the mentor was unexpectedly emotional?
19. Has your mentor ever shared feeling emotional during a meeting after the fact?
20. Are there emotions you avoid expressing in meetings?
21.

Closing

Those are all the questions I have for you. Do you think there's anything else important that I need to know? Would it be okay if I e-mailed or called you to follow up with any further questions? I really appreciate your time.

Appendix B

Mentor Interview Protocol

Date/Time of Interview:

Place of Interview:

Interview Facilitator(s):

Participant Pseudonym:

PURPOSE STATEMENT: This research seeks to better understand mentor/mentee relationships between faculty and graduate through face-threatening conversations. As you answer the questions, think about your experiences with graduate students as you have helped guide them through their graduate programs.

Before interview: Please pick a pseudonym that you can go by. This is to protect your identity by keeping it confidential.

Interview Questions

Orientation to topic:

1. How does the mentoring/advising process in your department typically work?
    a. How is your mentoring similar or different to your colleagues?
2. How would you describe your mentoring style?
    a. How do you think your mentees would describe your mentoring style?
    b. What metaphor(s) would you use to describe your mentoring style?
3. What qualities, skills, or abilities do you think make for a good mentor?
    a. Do you think its important for mentors to be aware of their emotions and the emotions of students they mentor?
    b. Have you seen examples of what does/doesn't work?
4. What kinds of things do you typically talk about in your meetings with your mentees?
5. How often do you talk about your mentees progress?
    a. Is this a formal or an informal process? (like do you wait until an annual review to make this move? Why?)
6. Did you receive formal training to be a mentor?
    a. If so, what was that like?
    b. If not, how have you learned to become a mentor?
7. How do you maintain boundaries within mentoring relationships?
    a. Do you think anything is ever off limits?
    b. Have you ever had to push your boundaries? (Examples: personal relationships, health and wellness, topics not directly related to work, sex, etc.)
8. How do your mentees contact you?
    a. Do you have rules or norms about contacting one another?
9. Describe relational norms you have established with your mentees.

Transition statement: Now that we have an idea of your relationship and understanding of mentoring, I'd like to dive deeper into some of the conversations you've had with your graduate students. In this next section I want to hear about times you've offered advice, feedback, and praise to your students – it can be positive, negative, neutral, or corrective. Any specific stories or examples you provide would be helpful. If you mention any specific names, I'll be sure to assign them pseudonyms in the final analysis.

Face-Threatening Acts:

1. Tell me about a time when you gave feedback to a mentee.
2. Tell me about a time when you had a mentee who was not meeting your expectations.
    a. What did you say to them?
3. What advice do you give to mentees when they are struggling?
    a. How does it make you feel to have these conversations?
4. What considerations do you have when you are preparing for a potentially confrontational conversation?
5. Tell me about a time when you had a confrontational talk with a mentee.
6. Can you think of a time when you were attempting to act in your mentee's best interests, but they did not perceive you as doing so?
7. What do you find is the best approach to motivating an unmotivated mentee?
    a. Alternatives: To redirect a mentee that has gone off the path? Get a mentee back on track?
8. Have you ever had to counsel a mentee to leave the program or organization (or work with a different advisor?) What did that conversation sound like?
    a. Has a mentee ever switched from working with you to a different faculty member? How did they tell you they were going to work with someone else?
        i. How did you feel when this happened?
9. Describe a time you had to give unsolicited advice to a mentee.
    a. How do you know when it's time to give unsolicited advice?
    b. Have you ever stopped yourself from giving unsolicited advice to a mentee? If so, can you describe that decision?
10. Can you tell me about a time when you had to address something you thought was awkward with one of your mentees?
11. Think about a turning-point you had with a mentee.
    a. What were the conversations like that led you to the turning-point?
12. Can you tell me about conversational mistakes you have made when having difficult conversations with mentees?
    a. Where do you have these conversations?
    b. How important is the space to you to have the conversations?
13. When you have to give bad news to a mentee, how do you like to deliver it?
    a. What about good news?
14. Describe one of your most memorable mentee relationships (good or bad).
    a. What makes it memorable?

Emotional Communication

15. Tell me about at time when you communicated your emotions/feelings to a mentee.

    a. How did they respond?

16. Tell me about a time when you felt like you were emotionally aware of yourself (or the other person) in a meeting with one of your mentees.
    a. What about a time when a protégé was emotionally aware?
17. Tell me about a time when you were emotional in an advising meeting?
    a. Did you express the emotions?
18. Tell me about a time when a mentee was emotional in a meeting?
19. Are there emotions you avoid expressing in meetings?
20. Has a mentee ever shared feeling emotional during a meeting after the fact? If so, tell me about that.
    a. Were you aware they were feeling that way in the moment?

Final Questions:

21. What is a piece of advice you would give to a colleague that is about to have a confrontational talk with their mentee?
22. What is a piece of advice about mentoring generally that you would give to new faculty?

Closing

Those are all the questions I have for you. Do you think there's anything else important that I need to know? Would it be okay if I e-mailed or called you to follow up with any further questions? I really appreciate your time.

Appendix C

Recruitment Materials

Email for Recruitment:

Subject: Mentor Relationships and Advice Study

Dear [administrator/department chair],

My name is Abigail Kingsford. I am a doctoral candidate in the University of Kansas, Department of Communication Studies and am conducting a research study as part of my dissertation. My research explores the relationships of faculty mentors and graduate student mentees and the process of giving advice.

I would like to conduct audio-recorded interviews with individuals that are a part of a formal relationships. To qualify, faculty must have experience with formal mentorship of graduate students and have mentored at least five graduate students through completion of their program. Graduate students must have at least three years of graduate study complete and have been working with their current mentor for at least one year. All participants must be at least 18 years of age. Each interview should take between 45 to 90 minutes. The interviews would be conducted over the phone or via Zoom video conference technology, whichever the participants are most comfortable with.

There is little to no harm that will come to participants by volunteering for the study. The discussion of personal/professional stressors and struggles could cause some emotional strain, but no more than participants would experience in their daily lives. Participants will be volunteering for a study that will be used to better understand their experiences and help practitioners improve programs and resources for formal mentoring programs. I have received IRB approval to conduct this study.

I would really appreciate your help in identifying potential participants who would be open to talking to me about their experiences.

Could you please forward the note below to faculty mentors and graduate students for potential participation in my study?

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like further information about the study. Thank you for your help and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Abigail Kingsford
University of Kansas
Email: AKingsford@ku.edu

Note to potential participants:

Hi,

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Kansas conducting research exploring the relationships of mentors and mentees and the process of giving advice.

To make this happen, I would like you to consider participating in an audio-recorded interview that should take approximately 45 to 90 minutes. The interview will be conducted over the phone or via Zoom video conference at a day/time of your convenience. All participants must be at least 18 years of age. Graduate students must have completed at least 3 years of graduate school and worked at least one year with your current advisor to be eligible to participate. Faculty mentors must have formally mentored at least 5 graduate students through the completion of their graduate degree programs to be eligible to participate.

There is little to no harm that will come to participants by volunteering for the study. The discussion of personal/professional stressors and struggles could cause some emotional strain, but no more than participants would experience in their daily lives. Participants will be volunteering for a study that will be used to better understand their experiences and help practitioners improve programs and resources for formal mentoring programs. I have received IRB approval to conduct this study.

Please note that your decision to participate is completely voluntary. If you would like to share your experiences, please contact me using my email address listed below and we will schedule a day/time for the interview.

Thanks,
Abigail Kingsford
University of Kansas

Email: AKingsford@ku.edu

Email responding to volunteers interested in participating in the study:

Thank you for your interest in my research study through the University of Kansas. I really appreciate your willingness to participate and look forward to meeting you soon.

Please let me know which of the following times would work best for you to conduct our 45-to-90-minute interview.
[List days/times availabilities here]

As a reminder, your participation in this study will entail a conversation to discuss your mentoring experiences. There is little to no harm that will come to participants by volunteering for the study. The discussion of personal/professional stressors and struggles could cause some

emotional strain, but no more than participants would experience in their daily lives. Participants will be volunteering for a study that will be used to better understand their experiences and help practitioners improve programs and resources for formal mentoring programs. I have received IRB approval to conduct this study.

We can conduct the interview over the phone or via video conferencing at your preference, once we find a day/time that best fits our schedule.

Hope you are doing well and we'll be in touch.

Sincerely,
Abigail Kingsford
University of Kansas
Email: AKingsford@ku.edu

Phone Contact Script

Hello, my name is Abigail, and I was told that you might be interested in participating in my research exploring relationships of mentors and mentees and the process of giving advice. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Kansas. You will participate in one audio-recorded interview that will take approximately 45 to 90 minutes. To be eligible, you must be 18 years old, and either a faculty member who has mentored at least 5 graduate students to completion of their programs, or a graduate student who has completed at least 3 years of graduate school and worked at least one year with your current advisor.

There is little to no harm that will come to participants by volunteering for the study. The discussion of personal/professional stressors and struggles could cause some emotional strain, but no more than participants would experience in their daily lives. Participants will be volunteering for a study that will be used to better understand their experiences and help practitioners improve programs and resources for formal mentoring programs. I have received IRB approval to conduct this study.

If you meet these requirements, would you be interested in participating?

Social Media Posts:
Personal Account Post:
Research Volunteers Needed!
I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Kansas, and I am looking for faculty mentors and graduate students being mentored for research about Mentors and giving advice.
All participants must be at least 18 years of age
-**Graduate students** who have completed at least 3 years of graduate school and worked at least one year with your current advisor are eligible.
-**Faculty** mentors who have formally mentored at least 5 graduate students through the completion of their graduate degree programs.

Interviews will be audio-recorded, last approximately 45 to 90 minutes and all answers are confidential.

There is little to no harm that will come to participants by volunteering for the study. The discussion of personal/professional stressors and struggles could cause some emotional strain, but no more than participants would experience in their daily lives. Participants will be volunteering for a study that will be used to better understand their experiences and help practitioners improve programs and resources for formal mentoring programs. I have received IRB approval to conduct this study.

Direct message me if you are interested, or email me at AKingsford@ku.edu

Shareable Post:
Research Volunteers Needed!
My friend is a doctoral candidate at the University of Kansas and is looking for faculty mentors and graduate students being mentored for research about Mentors and giving advice.

All participants must be at least 18 years of age
-**Graduate students** who have completed at least 3 years of graduate school and worked at least one year with your current advisor are eligible to participate.
-**Faculty** mentors who have formally mentored at least 5 graduate students through the completion of their graduate degree programs are eligible to participate.

Interviews will be audio-recorded, last approximately 45 to 90 minutes and all answers are confidential.

There is little to no harm that will come to participants by volunteering for the study. The discussion of personal/professional stressors and struggles could cause some emotional strain, but no more than participants would experience in their daily lives. Participants will be volunteering for a study that will be used to better understand their experiences and help practitioners improve programs and resources for formal mentoring programs. This study received IRB approval to conduct this research.

Contact Abigail Kingsford if interested in participating!
Thanks for your consideration!
Email: AKingsford@ku.edu

Appendix D

Information Statement

Researchers: The primary researcher Abigail N. Kingsford., Graduate Student at University of Kansas, under the direction of Angela N. Gist-Mackey, PhD, Assistant Professor at the University of Kansas, as part of a dissertation project.

Purpose: We are conducting this study to better understand mentors' advice-giving strategies to their student protégés.

Participant Eligibility: To participate in this study you should either be a faculty mentor or a graduate student being mentoring. See more details about eligibility for each type of participants before.

> **Mentor Eligibility:** The following qualifications should be met by all participants: (1) be at least 18 years of age (2) in a formal mentoring role with graduate students and (3) have experienced mentoring at least five students through the completion of their program. Your participation entails completing an audio recorded interview with the primary researcher and filling out a short demographic questionnaire. You may also be asked to give feedback on the analysis later in the process. You may choose to participate in that phase of the research as well but are under no obligation to do so.
>
> **Graduate Student Eligibility:** The following qualifications should be met by all participants: (1) be at least 18 years of age (2) the completion of at least three years of graduate school, (3) with at least one year spent working with their current mentor. Your participation entails completing an audio recorded interview with the primary researcher and filling out a short demographic questionnaire. You may also be asked to give feedback on the analysis later in the process. You may choose to participate in that phase of the research as well but are under no obligation to do so.

Time: In total, participation should take between 45 to 90 minutes, depending on how much you choose to participate and on what you have to say. The interview conversation will be audio taped.

Voluntary: Your participation is voluntary. You may quit at any time and you may refuse to answer any question without consequence.

Risk: There is minimal risk involved with the study. There is no more risk than you would experience in your daily interactions.

Benefits: The results of this study may help to promote understanding about the daily experiences of mentoring relationships within academia.

Confidentiality: Your identity will not be revealed in written or verbal presentations of the data. The following steps will be taken to protect your identity

1. Consent forms will be separated from the data.
2. Personal identifying information will be eliminated from transcripts and any reporting of the data.
3. Your name will be changed to a pseudonym of your choosing on transcripts to further protect your identity.
4. You can refuse to answer any question asked.
5. Audio files will be password protected.

Refusal to sign consent and authorization: You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

Audio Recording Consent: This study will involve audio recording. Audio recording is required to participate in the study. If you do not agree to audio recording you can voluntarily withdraw from this study. In addition, participation can be stopped at any point during the interview. Audio files may be transcribed by a paid transcriptionist who will have access to the audio files for a limited period of time. The paid transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement prior to transcribing the files. Once transcripts are completed and approved by the researcher, the paid transcriptionist will erase their copy of the audio files within 30 days of completing the transcription. The researcher(s) will have access to both audio files and transcripts of the focus group. The researchers will keep transcripts indefinitely and audio recordings for up to 1 year after the analysis is complete.

Please select one of the two following statements:

____ I am qualified to participate in this study. Also, I agree to have this interview audio-recorded and maintain the right to stop recording at any time.

____ I do not agree to have this interview audio-recorded and I withdraw from this study.

Participant certification: I have read this consent and authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email irb@ku.edu.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my continuation to participate, I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

Researcher Contact Information:

Abigail N. Kingsford
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Communication Studies
1440 Jayhawk Blvd, 102 Bailey Hall
801-808-2689
akingsford@ku.edu

Angela N. Gist-Mackey, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Communication Studies
1440 Jayhawk Blvd, 102 Bailey Hall
785-864- 4918
angela.gist.mackey@ku.edu

Appendix E

Demographic Survey - Mentor

1. What is your age?
    a. 18 – 24
    b. 25 – 29
    c. 30 – 34
    d. 35 – 39
    e. 40 – 44
    f. 45 – 49
    g. 50 – 54
    h. 55 – 59
    i. 60 – 64
    j. 65+
2. What is your gender?
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Transgender
    d. Non-Binary
    e. Intersex
    f. Other
    g. Prefer not to say
3. What is your current occupation? ___________________________________
4. What discipline do you currently work in? ___________________________
5. How many years of graduate education have you completed?___________
6. How long have you been employed by your current employer? _________
7. What is your annual compensation?
    - Less than $20,000.
    - $20,000 to $34,999.
    - $35,000 to $49,999.
    - $50,000 to $74,999.
    - $75,000 to $99,999.
    - Over $100,000.
8. Racial/Ethnic Identity - please circle all categories that you would use to describe yourself:
    - American Indian / Native American
    - Asian/Pacific Islander
    - Black / African American
    - Hispanic / Latino
    - White/Caucasian
    - Other: ____
9. How many students have you mentored in your total career?
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3

- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21+

10. How many formal mentees do you work with currently? ___________
11. What is your formal job title? ______________________________

Demographic Survey – Protégé

1. What is your age?
    a. 18 – 24
    b. 25 – 29
    c. 30 – 34
    d. 35 – 39
    e. 40 – 44
    f. 45 – 49
    g. 50 – 54
    h. 55 – 59
    i. 60 – 64
    j. 65+
2. What is your gender?
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Transgender
    d. Non-Binary
    e. Intersex
    f. Other
    g. Prefer not to say
3. What is your current occupation? ___________________________________
4. What discipline do/did you study? _________________________________
5. How long have you been employed by your current employer? _________
12. What is your annual compensation?
    - Less than $20,000.
    - $20,000 to $34,999.
    - $35,000 to $49,999.
    - $50,000 to $74,999.
    - $75,000 to $99,999.
    - Over $100,000.
6. How many years of graduate education have you completed?___________
7. Racial/Ethnic Identity - please circle all categories you would use to describe yourself:
    - American Indian / Native American
    - Asian/Pacific Islander
    - Black / African American
    - Hispanic / Latino
    - White/Caucasian
    - Other: ____
8. How many mentors have you worked with throughout your graduate education? _______
9. How many formal mentors do you work with currently? ___________
10. Have you changed mentors at any point in your graduate education while at the same institution?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Other - Explain